

THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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 - LEAGUE OF FAITH
- ✕ JESUS, AN IDEAL OF GODHEAD AND HUMANITY
 - THE MOTHER OF LANGUAGES
 - SPIRITUALISM IN ISLAM

THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

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Imam of the Mosque, Woking

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THE MOSQUE, WOKING

First published in May 1924

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Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, LONDON AND WOKING

To

THE SAD BUT EVER-GREEN

MEMORY OF MY FRIEND AND COUNSELLOR IN LIFE

SHAIKH RAHMATULLAH

(May his soul rest in peace)

PREFATORY NOTE

MY present sojourn at Alexandria, where I am waiting for a boat to India, induced me to render into English the book I wrote in the Indian vernacular, during my Pilgrimage days at Mecca. Thanks to the more than kind hospitality of King Husain, we—Lord Headley and M. Abdul Mohy, the Mufti of the Woking Mosque, and myself—were given a beautiful and commodious flat, with windows facing the sacred House of Allah. The holy shrine, before my naked eyes every minute, reminded me of the thundering message I speak of hereafter, that came to me there in the words of the Holy Qur-án, for the consideration and the reclamation of those among whom it has fallen to my lot to work to the true Faith of Jesus.

The sacred scene, there continually presented, of hundreds of thousands of people on their knees, with their heads in the dust, worshipping the One and Only God, could not fail to inspire me with the idea which afterwards became shaped in these pages. It seemed to me right to raise my voice, there and then,

and to invite others to the reality of the call, especially in the light of recently discovered material, astounding enough in its nature to perturb many a conscience in the West.

The time and the environments at Mecca were sacred and uplifting enough to create that psychology—free from bias and prejudice—that is needed for entering upon a subject so delicate; on one side to speak of a personage, favoured and exalted in the Muslim estimation as Jesus is; and on the other to expose the falsity and unworthiness of the colours in which he has been so unfortunately portrayed by the over-zeal and time-serving policy of those who, in the beginning of the darkness of the Middle Ages, sought to secure precedence for their faith over the other cults of the day.

In this field I am not the only worker. Dissatisfaction with received opinion in religious matters in the West came to the surface as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century of the Christian Era. It called forth researches into the various avenues of the Church's teachings. Richard Taylor in England, Nork in Germany, and Dupuis in France, were among the first of the workers. But their labours attracted but little notice. They were ignored and passed over as blasphemy. But others came to their rescue and enriched the harvest. J. H. Robertson,

Jane Harrington, Dr. Frazer, with J. D. Parson and Edward Carpenter of our own day, are the most lucid writers on the subject, and to them I am very greatly indebted.

Nevertheless I approach the task with a psychology differing somewhat from that of my predecessors. With most of them the sacred Hero of the theme is only a mythical conception, handed down from antiquity to the succeeding generations of men from time to time, with the change in the name and place, but retaining its pristine characteristic colours always. Jesus the Christ, they think, is not an historical entity, but a representative character of the old order—a carpenter with little historic authenticity, or only a piece of fiction with no pretension to anything else; a new centre of ancient traditions, a new sanctuary, as it were, which inshrines the legends of old. To me, however, he is a great Prophet, a messenger from God, who lived and tried to uplift his fellow-men. Veiled in a mystery too dense to allow an average eye to penetrate to the realities—that is to say, the everyday bearing of his message, his clarion is still audible—My God and Your God is One God. From the pedestal of Divinity, to which ignorance and credulity has raised him, he still says, “Do not call me good, for there is none good but God.”

In attempting to prove him a legendary character, some writers have gone so far as to trace almost all his utterances to Jewish and Buddhistic writings that existed long before he appeared. But, for all that, his utterances are not without the tinge of originality. He speaks with the force that comes only from a Prophet of the Lord.

On the strength of the material disclosed in these pages, others may declare him a piece of fiction, and dismiss him as such. But I accept him as True Master and a Teacher raised up by God, with a splendid message to humanity. My only attempt is to redeem the Master from all that is foreign to his real character; all that is alien to the very spirit of his teaching; all that sullies his name, and disfigures his character.

The work of some of these writers, more especially those of the last century, is somewhat discursive. In their attempt to explain the ancient mind, read its philosophy in the light of to-day, and then to make the Lord of Christianity fit in with the result, they go beyond the mark. The interest of the reader pursuing the main theme, becomes lost. He finds himself entangled in a maze of hazy theories arising out of undigested material, leading to a vast confusion of ideas that have no relevancy. I, however, have endeavoured

to avoid this snare. I have confined myself to bare statement of facts as discovered and unquestionably established. I have been tempted to make some observations, but they are very few. The facts discovered are too bold in their character to demand any introductory or explanatory note from me. I leave everything to the reader. Let him form his own judgment, and I shall be content.

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

BAROODY HOUSE, ALEXANDRIA,

September 1, 1923.

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THE SOURCES OF CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

AN ECHO FROM MECCA

It is disquieting to find that religion, which should be the surest means of adhesion between the various units of humanity, has proved, on the contrary, to be a great factor of discord. Man is a sociable creature ; his civilization depends on his living amicably with his fellow-men ; and yet no one can doubt that the power of unification possessed by religion is far stronger than that which can be claimed by social, colour, or race relations. If religion came from God, it must have been given in the same form to every race ; and more especially in those days when there were but scanty means of communication between nation and nation. The God of the Universe could not well have shown any partiality in this physical dispensation for human sustenance, much less could He have done so in spiritual

matters. If the physical requirements of all have been satisfied by the Divine Hand, religion, coming from God, should be given in the same form to the whole world. Many religions are at variance to-day over this simple truth, but the Holy Qur-án accepts it, and states in the clearest terms that every nationality and race received Prophets and Messengers from God, and were given one and the same religion. A Muslim, therefore, cannot but accept every other religion as coming in its original form from God. If his religion has been named Islam, which means "peace," it has been so named rightly ; and, in such a way, to acknowledge the Divine origin of every other religion, in its purity, is the best means of securing unity and concord.

All men come from the same source, and must drink from the same fountain ; but the pure elixir that descended from Heaven for our spiritual need in the form of Divine Revelation became polluted by human alloy, and has grown to be the chief cause of dissension in the human race. If we came from God, we must needs all have been treated alike by Him. The Holy Qur-án says :—

By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, and he is their guardian to-day, and they shall

have a painful chastisement. And We have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.¹

A very simple truth is revealed in the above verses ; no person or race has any special claim on the Divine Providence. His guidance must come to everyone ; He must show the same way to every race, and He must also set humanity right if she has deviated from the right course. Moreover, it would surely be unbecoming of Him if He first laid down one way to salvation, and then changed His mind.

The premises are quite clear, and they lead only to one clear conclusion ; if the religion of God, revealed to the world before the advent of the Prophet of Arabia, had lost its original purity, that purity must be restored to it again. He therefore invited the followers of the various religions in the following words of the Holy Qur-án :—

Say : O followers of the Book ! come to an equitable proposition between us and *you* that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah ; but if they turn back, then say : Bear witness that we are Muslims.²

¹ The Holy Qur-án.

² Ibid.

Thirteen hundred years ago this thrilling note was struck. The greater portion of the East responded to the call and became members of the Universal Brotherhood of Islam ; but the Islamic truth could not reach to the West, and the difference and the discord that exists to-day between the East and the West has greatly endangered the peace of the world.

That discord may be ascribed to various political reasons ; but the difference of religion is the main cause of trouble, at the root. If the gulf, widened on account of the religious differences, can possibly be bridged over, the rest of the problem of unity between East and West will admit of an easy solution. Take the Irish question for example. Religious differences have caused all the trouble in that country. Similar, too, is the case of Turkey. No one can deny the superiority of the Turks at least over the Bulgarians, the Serbians, and the Montenegrins, in the matter of civilization and culture ; yet the former have been denied what has been freely given to the latter. Even the Mexican Government may try the subject of any European country in their courts of justice, but in the case of Turkey there arises the question of the Capitulations. The reason is obvious ; it is religion. The war has come

to an end, its fire has died down, but the world has not been freed from the perils of its flames; they are still smouldering, and may yet burst into a worse and more universal conflagration. The world, as it stands at present, may be restored to lasting peace only through a good understanding between Muslims and Christians; and the teachings of Islam furnish the material for achieving this most desirable end. We Muslims accept Jesus as a messenger from God, and regard him as entitled to our allegiance, even as our own Prophet. We cannot do otherwise in the face of the words of the Holy Qur-án:—

Say : We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us; and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.¹

We make no distinction between Muhammad and other prophets. Nay, I can safely say, that our love for Jesus is in no case less than that cherished for him by those who pass under his name; and, in a sense, our regard for and devotion to him are more than that shown by his own followers. If Jesus, for

¹ The Holy Qur-án, ii. 136.

the sake of argument, was neither God nor His Son, in the sense in which the Church in the West accepts him, would it not be injurious to his memory to worship him as God? It is not love, but a sort of infatuation, bringing him under an unintentional libel. It is a disgrace, and not an honour, to call any person a son of a king, when he is not.

Muslims and Christians both cherish an equal love and respect for Jesus; but they are at daggers drawn against each other. It is really surprising when we ask ourselves, why, if one and the same personality is the object of love and the cause of ill-feeling between the two great units of humanity, they cannot come to some mutual understanding? If this question of *locus standi* is the only cause of divergence, could it not be ascertained and established amicably, especially in these days when the Modernist view of Christianity is clearing the ground so courageously and producing such encouraging results?

We Muslims assert that all that was believed and taught about various deities in the Pagan world—thousands of years before Jesus—in India, Egypt, Greece, Persia and Rome, has become incorporated in the pure and simple Faith of Jesus, and his blessed name soiled with things he never knew or taught. Ought not

we Muslims to resent it, if we find our Prophet Jesus divested of the most exalted position a man could claim, i.e. Divine Messengership, and given the office of a Pagan Deity, brought down to act as substitute for a sun-god—a popular deity in the ancient world; and all that was observed in the ceremonial of the heathen cult introduced into his Faith, which originally was none other than Islam? These pages have been written to throw light on this aspect of the question; but again I repeat that the motives of love, and of my duty towards my brethren, have also induced me to write them. We are sons of the same Father. We are all concerned in establishing the name and fame of that Father, but unfortunately a schism has arisen. We have become separated; some of His sons, the Christians, wish to revere the Father, from purest motives of love, in a way which, to His other set of sons, the Muslims, is most derogatory to the Father's reputation. This is the main issue of contention, but it can be easily settled, especially in these days of tolerance, when culture and civilization brush aside all narrow-mindedness, and have qualified at least the educated classes amongst us, to give a patient and appreciative hearing to views contrary to our own. The great message of peace in the Qur-ánic words—

“Come ye, people of the Book, to an equitable word . . .”—came from Mecca, (where I have come to-day to perform my Pilgrimage) thirteen hundred years ago, and did wonders in securing peace in a great portion of the world. I deem it, therefore, a most propitious place for repeating the same.

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN MIND IN THE CHURCH

THE beginning of the present century found great dissatisfaction in the camp of the Church. A well-known German ecclesiastic, Dr. Euquen by name, in his famous work that appeared before the commencement of the war, strongly urged upon the Church authorities the necessity of making serious and drastic reforms from within the Church. Her existing condition was, in his opinion, unsatisfactory enough to endanger the very fabric of Christianity. The name and fame of Dr. Euquen entitled his book to every consideration and respect, and it received very favourable and encouraging reviews from the Press. I read it, I admit, with surprise. I could not then understand how a Church could continue, and receive support from men of high literary acumen, after they had become cognizant of such weakness. The Church, if from God, could not, in my opinion, be rebuilt by human hands, after it had lost its integrity, as the author of the book thought it had. In July 1913 I was

invited to participate in a great religious conference held at Paris, and my surprise knew no bounds when I found the best of the Church culture coming forward to denounce its structural tenets, and exposing its error in the clearest terms. The object of the conference was twofold : to reform current religion in the West, or, failing that, to substitute for it a new religion, based on the principles taken from other religions, or on others to be newly framed and discovered. The conference contemplated a world-tour, which was to begin in November 1913. I was requested to participate in the movement, and consented to do so. But the war broke out and brought the whole scheme to nothing.

For some time everything was forgotten. The war, however, did one service to religion. It opened the eyes of the West. It exposed the hollowness of its ideas of self-sufficiency. It saw Muslim soldiers on the battle-field, devoted to religion and praying to God in their hours of leisure, while others were drinking and gambling. The war was, after all, between Christian nations with materialistic ideals, if the paradox be permitted. It showed that the religion of love, as Christianity has been called, had never actually been so. Though the war was engrossing enough to claim all attention, yet the general slaughter and sanguinary

devastations of humanity aroused, in many a mind, feelings of hatred and contempt towards certain portions of the Church service. This human slaughter was, after all, only a materialization of some of the Psalms which are sung in the Church, and which form a part of the Book of Common Prayer. It aroused a spirit of revolt in many quarters against the inclusion of such Psalms in the Prayer Book ; clergy and laity alike made strenuous demands that these Psalms be expunged from the Prayer Book. It was not an extraordinary demand, neither difficult to meet, as the revision of the Prayer Book was a common occurrence in the history of the Church. The committee lately formed for that purpose, in order to bring it up to modern requirements, have proposed the introduction of some new prayers—one for industrial peace, one for election time, one for troubled consciences, one for good weather ; in addition to which six of the ten Commandments have been shortened. And what is the process by which these revisions and additions are to become part and parcel of Christianity ? They have to pass through the House of the Bishops, the House of Clergy, the House of Laity, and finally to receive Parliamentary sanction, when they will attain full-fledged religious sanctity. This is how religion is coined in the West. Manufactured in the

human mint, it is stamped with Divine authority. Such has been the history of Christianity all along. A thing of human origin, it has failed to stand the test of time and experience, and has, of necessity, had to change its form from time to time, to readjust itself to changed conditions.¹ But those who demanded to have certain Psalms expunged from the Prayer Book forgot, in the heat of the moment, the consequent reflections which their demands were casting upon the genuineness of the Bible. The Psalms, after all, made a part of the Bible ; it showed that the Word of God was not free from human alloy. The question, however, came to the surface in a more clarified form, in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, in the sitting of July 5, 1917, when it was demanded, by some of the clergy, that the wording of certain of the questions ² put to them at their ordination, should be changed. These questions demanded their subscribing unfeignedly to the belief that everything in the Bible was from God. Their contention was that they could not take the oath in the form prescribed, as they did not believe in the truth of many of

¹ *Islamic Review*.

² Third question : " Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament ? " Answer : " I do so believe them."

the legends and events narrated in the Scriptures. They said they could not believe in the story of Jonah's fish, though Jesus himself seems to have done so, seeing that he referred to it when he is reported to have foretold his resurrection in these words :—

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas : For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.¹

The suggested form, however, ran as follows :
 “ ‘ Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, as conveying to us in many parts, and in divers manners, the revelation of God which is consummated in Jesus Christ ? ’ Answer :
 ‘ I do so believe them. ’ ”

The Dean of Canterbury said that the question, in the form suggested by the committee, did not give prominence to the fact that the Scriptures were the result of Divine inspiration and Divine authority, and that they were a vital part of the Christian faith. He moved as an amendment that the words should be :
 “ Do you acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by Divine inspiration ? ” But the Dean of Christ-

¹ Matthew xii. 39, 40.

church pointed out that that proposal would leave them exactly where they were before.

The Dean of Canterbury's amendment was negatived, 5 voting for it and 63 against. Several other amendments were proposed, the majority of them being rejected by the House, and eventually it was agreed, by 74 votes to 4, that the question should be put to deacons in the following form: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as conveying to us in many parts, and in divers manners, the revelation of God which is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Though the clerical conscience was pacified by the proposed change, it is interesting to note that the participators in the conference, with all the advantages of their university education, did not avoid committing the fallacy of *petitio principii*. Their knowledge of Jesus comes exclusively from the Bible, and if they could not subscribe to the validity of its narration of certain events in it, how could they accept its testimony concerning Jesus and his Divinity? The position was anomalous on the very face of it, and betrayed the error of the vicious circle, as I pointed out at that very time.¹

However, it became, though indirectly,

¹ *Islamic Review*, vol. v. p. 405.

nevertheless, to all intents and purposes, officially established at Canterbury that the Bible was not free from human adulteration ; which was just what the Holy Qur-án had said some thirteen hundred years ago :—

Do you (the Prophet) then hope that they would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this) ? . . . Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say, This is from Allah. . . .¹

The last book of God did not say that the whole of the Bible was a human compilation, for it admitted the Divine origin of many parts of the Bible, but it cautioned the believers in the Book against accepting it as wholly truth. If the world has taken thirteen hundred years for the finding of a truth, that came from the Holy Prophet Muhammad at a time when no one questioned the genuineness of the Bible, will not an honest mind incline to think that the revealer of the truth was speaking under something more than human inspiration ?

The Gospels did exist in their present form in the fifth century of the Christian era. The corruption, therefore, had already occurred in the Word of God. Would He suffer His revelations to remain contaminated, especially when they were sent for the uplifting of

¹ The Holy Qur-án, ii. 75 and 79.

humanity. He had been pleased to send, once, Judaism to man. It lost its purity, and Jesus came to reform it. Would He leave man to grope in the dark for centuries, if it became corrupt? Would He keep silence, and let man find out his own error? If man had to find his own salvation, where was the necessity of revelation at all?

So to think would be blasphemy, and an insult to His Providence. Water from above brings life to the whole of nature, but when it loses its vitality with its earthly admixture, a fresh supply comes to meet the demand. Will not God, therefore, do the same on the spiritual plane as He does on the physical? He certainly will do nothing contrary thereto. He must tell humanity of the corrupt nature of that "elixir of life"—the Divine revelation—which He sent through Jesus, and He did so. He spoke to mankind through Muhammad, the last of the prophets. He warned all races of mankind, including Christians, through the Qur-ánic message, that the Scriptures that form the bases of their respective faiths were not free from human interpolation.

Religion, after all, is the most sacred thing. The Holy Qur-án could render no better service to humanity than to inform her of the fatal defect that was existing in all the religions then in vogue—a defect which their

respective followers have now realized. I wish the people of the Book had listened to what the Holy Qur-án said on the subject, for then the history of the world would have been quite different. However, I have nothing but admiration for the courage of many of the Church ministers in the West who, as soon as they found that the Word of God contained false stories, did not mince matters, but declared at once to the world that many portions of the Bible were not true. Canon Barnes, Canon of Westminster, in one of his public utterances, remarked that if we allowed some of the legends of the Book of Genesis to remain in the curriculum of studies, the coming generation would think that our standard of truth was very low.¹

¹ With some interest I read the remarks of Canon Barnes in the course of a speech given to the Association of University Women Teachers, held at University College, London. From it I make the following extract :—

“In this connection it was most important that the true nature and value of the Old Testament should be explained to children. It was Jewish literature, and was valuable for us mainly because it showed how the Jewish prophets were led to the idea of God, which Jesus accepted and emphasized, and because in it vague expectations of a Messiah foreshadowed the advent of Christ. But in the Old Testament were also to be found folklore, defective history, half-savage morality, obsolete forms of worship based upon primitive and erroneous ideas of the nature of God, and crude science. The whole, however, was valuable as showing the growth of a pure

The remark needs no comment. It shows that the learned Canon does not believe in the truth of those legends. He regards them as folk-lore, replete with half-savage morality. He may brush them aside as unimportant, and yet he cannot do so without damaging seriously the very structure of his own Church. If the story of the fall of Adam is not correct, and the theory of sin in nature is therefore untenable, as many of the Church dignitaries now think, the principle of Atonement will, *ipso facto*, fall to the ground.

The belief in the principle of Atonement is the sequel of the belief in the heritage of sin, which in itself is the outcome of the fall of Adam. It is said that the first parents committed sin, which we inherited. Sin innate in

monotheism among the Jews—a religious phenomenon as remarkable and inexplicable as the great intellectual development of the golden ages of Greece. It was very difficult to convey truths like this to children, and so it seemed to him better to postpone the Old Testament part of the religious teachings to the later stages; otherwise children would learn stories like that with which the Book of Genesis opened which they would afterwards discover to be untrue.

“He had come reluctantly to the conclusion that it was highly dangerous to use, for didactic purposes, such allegories as the creation of woman, the Daniel stories, and Jonah; it encouraged the prevalent belief that religious people had a low standard of truth.” (*Islamic Review*, vol. x. pp. 45, 46.)

human nature therefore demanded punishment, but God saved man through Atonement. No man can atone for the sin of another, as he himself is sinful, and in need of atonement. No one but God is free from sin. Therefore He only can atone for others' sin. Thus it is clear that all Christian beliefs—Divinity of Jesus, His Atonement, etc.—take the story of the fall of Adam for their basis. It is the bed-rock of the Church, and if it be shattered the whole Church must collapse.

It is, however, a matter of rejoicing to note that the theory of sin in nature is losing ground, and does not appeal to many; the world is gradually coming to realize the truth of Muhammad's noble utterance, that every child, wherever it is born, enters into the world with a pure nature. Sin is an acquisition, and not a heritage.

Ours are the days of culture and science, and the Western world is not prepared to admit everything in the Bible. It has long been my firm opinion that even if the Holy Qur-án had been silent as to the alleged genuine nature of the Bible's Gospel, the book has the merits of its defects. Muslims accept Jesus as a Prophet of God, and therefore are not prepared to accept any narrative of Jesus in the Bible which is not consistent with the dignity of a Prophet. His treatment of his

own mother, as recorded in the Bible, is scarcely edifying. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" does not sound to Muslims like an expression of filial regard from a son to his mother, who had been worrying for her child, and had been searching for him the whole day; but when she finds him, sitting with her own friends, and gives expression to her resentment, though in a mild and motherly manner, the reply which she receives from the son is scarcely a solace to a tired mother. However, the Holy Qur-án comes to exculpate Jesus when it says that Jesus was always good and respectful to his mother. Had the Holy Qur-án been silent on the point, we should still be reluctant to accept the record of the New Testament. We regard all Prophets as sinless and of a high morality; therefore we could not accept Jesus as Prophet if we believed in many stories of the Bible. We Muslims cherish great respect for all the Prophets of the world, and make mention of them in the most reverent terms, but in this present instance we fail to understand the psychology of the West. Speaking on the vexed question of divorce, the Bishop of Durham was reported to have said a few months ago that if Jesus "had lived in our days he would have been wiser." I fail to understand how a servant and a teacher of

the Church of Christ could speak so of his Master and God. A remark, at once so unbecoming and so derogatory to the position of the Prophet, could not fail to arouse the keenest resentment among Muslims—a resentment which received expression in the pages of the *Islamic Review* at the time.¹

¹ JESUS THE WISEST OF HIS TIME.—So we believe him to be, we who accept him as Prophet and a messenger of God. He could not, we say, be otherwise, being chosen of God for the performance of a Divine Mission. But those who believe in his Divinity have in these latter days become wiser and are disposed to think otherwise. They incline to the belief that their God, when he came on the earth for man's salvation, proved himself, after all, just averagely imperfect man; of high moral calibre, it is true, of lofty ideals, but a dreamer—a dreamer for his own age and not for all time—let alone eternity—and, of course, hopelessly unpractical. Of such is the learned Bishop of Durham, Dr. Henson.

His Lordship is of opinion that if Jesus had lived in the present century he would have been wiser. Yet, on consideration, it would seem that this lack of wisdom has been evinced not by Jesus, but by those who accredit him with what he never claimed, and of these Dr. Henson is one. Jesus declared to his disciples that he was man like themselves. All his miraculous achievements were, given certain conditions, equally possible for them. He came with a revelation suited to the time and place for the mission, which, as he says, was to the Jews alone. His Sermon on the Mount, in all its ethical sublimity, was intended for the proud and stiff-necked Jew who stretched the letter of the law to its breaking-point in order to evade the spirit. The Jewish Law of Divorce gave ample latitude for changing wives and getting young women

It is, however, true that much foreign matter derived from Paganism was incorporated in the religion of Jesus. Things never taught by him are passed under his name. The Holy Qur-án says :—

And when Allah will say : O Jesus, son of Mary, *did you* say to men, Take me and my mother for two Gods besides Allah, he will say : Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say) ; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it ; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind ; surely Thou art the Great Knower of the unseen things. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with : That serve Allah,

“into trouble”—as it is euphemistically termed nowadays. The Master, whose Mission it was to reform his tribe, could not give a higher and holier ordinance than that contained in the words, “What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”

This was the wisest interpretation of the Judaic Law of Divorce, keeping in view the conditions obtaining two thousand years ago in Judæa. Any unwisdom attaching thereto lies at the door of those who sought in these words of Jesus a universal application. He claimed no such universality for himself, inasmuch as he did not profess to give the whole truth : “I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.” The Law he gave could not therefore be taken as a perfect law ; for the promulgation of the perfect law was reserved for the promised messenger who was to come. Leaving aside the question who was the comforter, Jesus admits himself the deficiency in his teachings. Moreover, when the very authenticity of the record of the life and sayings of Jesus cannot be trusted, what right has the Bishop of Durham to question his wisdom ?

my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things.¹

In other words, the religion now passing under the name of Jesus was never taught by him. Even the words of Jesus reported in the Gospel conform to this Qur-ánic truth. He never claimed to be God. He would not allow his followers to be called after his name—the name “Christian” was taken in the third century in the Council at Nice. He observed all the laws given through Moses and the patriarch of the house of Jacob.

If we study the Gospel without reference to the writings of St. Paul, the words of Jesus do not substantiate the teaching of his Church to-day. I need not, however, enter into this discussion. I will confine myself to the following reports of the Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Girton College, Cambridge, on August 9, 1917, under the presidency of Professor Percy Gardner, Chairman of the Conference Committee. “Did Christ Found the Church?” was the subject of the paper read by Dean Inge, who said that Jesus appeared to his contemporaries as a Prophet. He never tried to form a schism in the Jewish Church, or to found a rival organization. He

¹ The Holy Qur-án, v. 116, 117.

proclaimed spiritual independence while accepting the institutions of his time and country. The break with Judaism was inevitable, but he made no provision for a Christian polity.

The Rev. J. R. Wilkinson, who opened the discussion, took the same view as the Dean, and other speakers were the Rev. C. W. Emmet, Bishop Mercer, the Rev. L. Patterson, the Rev. F. Mann, the Rev. H. Symonds, and the Rev. H. A. Major.

“Archdeacon Ford answered affirmatively the Dean’s question, ‘Did Christ Found the Church?’ and Mr. Pringle thereupon said that the Archdeacon was the only person who in the course of the discussion had given the question an affirmative answer.”¹

I often wonder why a Jew from Tarsus, though well versed in Greek and Roman mythology, as well as in the Alexandrian school of Platonic philosophy, with which he coloured and saturated the simple faith of Jesus and marred its beauty, but having no personal knowledge either of Jesus or of his teachings—nay, one who represented the worst type of enemy of the Master in his lifetime and was ever ready to destroy his teachings—should be allowed to dominate the religion to such an extent as to change its character altogether. The Jesus of the Bible and the

¹ *The Times*, August 10, 1917.

Jesus of St. Paul are two different entities, and irreconcilable to each other. So they have appeared to many thoughtful people, Count Tolstoy among them. He would not accept Jesus and Paul together, so he rejected the latter absolutely, and thus cut the knot. No doubt the Apostle to the Gentiles had suffered much for the cause of the Church that he made, and was a martyr. But the reason is obvious. He had gone too far to go back, and could not avoid the consequences. The deliberators of the Cambridge Conference of 1918 came to the same conclusion. They could not see the hand of Jesus in the superstructure of the Church so erected by St. Paul and his followers.

The idea of the man-God was not strange to the Gentiles. Their mythologies were teeming with God Incarnate. His sufferings for human salvation, his resurrection, human sin and its expiation through God's sacrifice, were things rampant in Greek and Roman literature. The Gentiles of the days of St. Paul could easily see in Jesus, as portrayed by the Apostle, a reflection of their own God, and accept him as a representative of the class that were believed to have visited the earth in the olden days (as is, for example, the opinion of Gibbon), and participated with them in human affairs. The vigilant eye of St. Paul and of the monks

who were really builders of the Church, could easily see that side of human psychology. They therefore clothed Jesus with Divinity, and saturated their writings with the phraseology current in Pagan and other philosophic literature of the day, as I will show later on. Their over-zeal for the cause, perhaps, led them to adopt a course so efficacious in popularizing their teachings.

The Modernist Church, after arriving at the conclusion mentioned above, at Cambridge, could not accept the son of Mary as their God, and were bound, therefore, to explain their conception of the Divinity of Jesus. This they did, in 1921, when they met at Oxford in a representative conference comprising many bishops and other Church dignitaries. The task was left to the late Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle. He acquitted himself very well, but his exposition of the question greatly surprised the Christian world. He said that his reading of the Bible did not allow him to accept Jesus as God, who, in the opinion of the learned Dean, was man and not God, in every sense of the word.

There is a growing demand, he said, that liberal theologians should say, in quite definite words, what they really mean when they use the traditional language about the Divinity of Christ. The following are some of the things

that we do not, and cannot, mean by ascribing Divinity to Christ :—

(1) Jesus did not claim Divinity for himself. He may have allowed himself to be called Messiah, but never, in any critically well-attested sayings is there anything which suggests that his conscious relation to God is other than that of a man towards God. The speeches of the fourth Gospel, where they go beyond the synoptic conception, cannot be regarded as history.

(2) It follows from his admission that Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, and that he had not merely a human body, but a human soul, intellect and will.

(3) It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine unless we say that all human souls exist before their birth in the world, but that is not the usually accepted catholic position.

(4) The Divinity of Christ does not of necessity imply virgin birth or any other miracle. The virgin birth, if it could be historically proved, would be no demonstration of Christ's Divinity, nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt on that doctrine.

(5) The Divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. There is no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more

than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, than that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny that he entertained some anticipations about the future which history has not verified.

The Rev. H. D. A. Major, Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, who opened the discussion, was as outspoken as the Dean.

"It should be clearly realized (said Mr. Major) that Jesus did not claim in the Gospels to be the son of God in a physical sense, such as the narratives of virgin birth suggest, nor did he claim to be the son of God in a metaphysical sense, such as was required by the Nicene theology. He claimed to be God's son in a normal sense, in the sense in which all human beings are sons of God, as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God and capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts." ¹

I can hardly appreciate the conception of the Divinity that the late Dr. Rashdall entertained, after reading his above-quoted utterance. He has, in my opinion, lowered the position of Jesus even from the status of a Prophet, leaving aside the question of God-

¹ *Islamic Review*, vol. ix., No. 8, pp. 276-8.

hood. A messenger from God comes to correct wrong notions of his time concerning religious matters ; but Jesus, as portrayed by the late Dean of Carlisle, seems to share in the ignorance of his contemporaries. What else could he do ? His own knowledge was no more than theirs. In a subsequent explanation the learned Dean asserted that the Divinity of Jesus lay only in the production of Divine morals, as Jesus did in his days. In other words, Jesus became imbued with Divine attributes. It is not only the best and the most rational view of the case, but it is a Muslim verity. “ Imbue yourself with Divine attributes ” is the watchword of the life of a Muslim, in the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ; and a Muslim cannot possibly take exception to the position adopted by the late Dr. Rashdall. Besides, what the learned Dean claimed for Jesus is potentially a common heritage of every man in Islam. Jesus himself seems to hold the same view. He wants us to follow him and to be dyed in his colours. How can it be done if we are of a different calibre, and do not possess his capacity and consciousness ? We must share with him, in his humanity or Divinity—terms are of no consequence, if they carry the same concept—otherwise his demand from us is beside the mark. If physically, morally or

intellectually we are equal with him, as the late Dr. Rashdall admitted, I fail to understand how spiritually, or in Divinity, he could be different from us. All men are born sinless, so says Islam. They come to this world with a perfect nature equipped with highest capabilities. They can soar to the highest of the high. They may differ in their acquisition and responsibilities. It is a matter of accident. But they are equal with Jesus and all other messengers of God in their aptitude and capabilities.

The effect of these honest and able deliberations on the mind of Christian people in general, and on the English in particular, can better be imagined than described. The churches became empty, and the clergy had to address vacant pews and unoccupied benches. In this connection the Bishop of London recently remarked that there are forty-nine City churches, and forty-nine men have to go there each Sunday to find congregations of four in some and not more than twelve in any. Speaking of men in the country churches, Dr. Simpson, in the Church Congress held at Plymouth in September 1923, remarked that where there were ten people who came to church before the war, five perhaps came now. "In this country Christianity is fighting for its existence, and losing ground steadily. The

Churches no longer influence modern Englishmen ; and, with the spread of education, they are being deserted by the women." Such is the view which I heard recently expressed, and it is widely shared.¹ This inattentiveness to religion in the West has perturbed many minds, which set themselves to search for some satisfactory explanation. It came from many able clerics, Canon Barnes, of Westminster, being one of them ; but the difficult knot was cleanly cut by the Archbishop of York, who, in one of his stirring sermons, asserted that religion is attractive but the Church is repulsive. This laconic but, at the same time, portentous remark cleared the whole ground, and showed that the Church as it exists does not teach the religion needed by man. The question itself became the subject of further deliberation when notable persons of the Church of England met at Oxford in 1922. They concluded that the religion taught by Jesus, if shorn of all human accretion, was, after all, a religion of love. They were honest enough to admit that the religion of Buddha was also of the same type, though they could not see their way to bring other religions into the same category ; but one thing was established, that other religions besides Christianity were of

¹ Canon Barnes, under the heading "Is English Christianity Dying ?" in the *Evening News*, 1923.

equal importance, and that Christianity could not claim exclusive merit.

These deliberations not only represent the views of the few, but they seem to be held by most of the thinking minds of the Church. This I observed with great surprise and interest. Every one of those deliberations—and there have been many since 1917—is followed by a general controversial discussion in the Press, in which many of the bishops and high officials of the Church take part; and it is worthy of note that the trend of learned opinion goes to support the new theory. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury seems to sympathize with the modern views; and it is clear that these views, when summed up together, cannot now fail to affect seriously the catholicity of the faith generally held in Christendom. If the genuineness of the Bible has been rightly impeached, and the story of the fall of Adam, with the theory of sin in nature as its consequence, discarded; if the Church, passing under the name of Christ, was neither founded by Jesus, nor known to him, and therefore a conception of St. Paul; and last of all, but not least, if Jesus is not God, but man, in every sense of the word, as the Oxford Conference seemed to hold, and his Divinity lies only in his reproductions of Divine morals, an acquisition open to every

member of humanity, as believed by Muslims—and if this religion is only the religion of love and not the religion of sin and atonement—a verity claimed by other religions as well, I wonder if these modern beliefs, in their collective form, have anything to do with what has been generally believed under the name of Christianity for the last seventeen centuries. These modern views are, no doubt, consistent with the views of Jesus, and had he lived in our days, he would have been the last person to say anything against them. However that may be, Muhammad came to do the same thing, and I speak the simple truth when I assert that these Modernists only represent Islam.

The pill so prepared by the Modernist could not easily be swallowed by the mass in general. The people generally resented it, and wanted to see the modern movement placed outside the pale of the Established Church in England. They met together and made representations to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject in 1921, requesting His Grace to purge the Church of such heresies, but the Archbishop could not see his way to accede to the wishes of the memorialists. Either the position of the Modernists appeared to him too strong to be refuted, or His Grace did not like to subdivide a religion which has already been subdivided into nearly four hundred sections,

especially when he is endeavouring to cast Wesleyanism and other English varieties of faith into one mould. One thing, however, is certain : the Church of Christ has lost ground in her own land, and the interest of the priests lies more in bringing the strayed flock back to the fold than in sending Foreign Missions to claim the heathen for Christianity.

A conference was held at Canterbury in June 1923 to consider the delicate situation of the Church. In the opinion of the Archbishop, the general apathy as regards Church-religion arose out of sectarian differences, and he, therefore, saw the remedy in the unity of the various Churches. But this is not the true solution of the problem, as a writer in the *Near East* remarks. The indifference and apathy did not arise from sectional divergences in the Church itself. It is the outcome of modern culture and science.

Addressing the Oxford Branch of the Churchmen's Union, Dean Inge, of St. Paul's, made some observations on the necessity for free, unfettered investigation of religious truths. The *Christian Life* reports him to have said :—

“ Many Churchmen would say that the place of liberal movement was outside the door. Yet just think what would be the result if all expression of free thought had been stifled within the Church of England. The Church would

now be committed to believe that the sun went round the earth, that Heaven was a place which we might reach in an aeroplane when we knew the way, that Hell was a place under our feet, and that, as the mediæval theologian suggested, volcanic eruptions were caused by over-population in the infernal regions—things which no educated people could or did believe. If these things were so, there would be no room in the Church of England to-day except for the fools and liars. Modern Churchmen believed that the Church was called upon to face difficulties and solve them by unfettered inquiry. They did not believe that authority or tradition had settled everything, that we had only to accept formulæ drawn up in the early centuries, but that we must take into account recent developments in philosophy, history and criticism, and, above all, natural science. Recent researches of older religions have brought to light things that are penetrating modern minds and leaving them no other course but to reject the time-honoured beliefs and received opinions on matters religious.”

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH MYSTERIES AND THE ANCIENT LEGENDS

THESE Modernist deliberations have perturbed many minds and aroused consternation in many quarters. But a sincere Christian need not be led by the decision of the Modernist. Though the Modernists count in their ranks men of high ability and position in the Established Church, and just as the Church in the East has always looked to the West for inspiration and guidance, yet the former may not abide by the conclusions of the latter, so a sincere Churchman need not be led by the decision of the Modernist. The position seems to be quite a tenable one. Religion, after all, is a matter of conscience, a matter between man and his God, though the sheep of the fold in Christendom have always shown implicit obedience to the shepherds.

Many Christians in the East could not accept the exposition given by the late Dr. Rashdall of the Divinity of Jesus, as it did not conform

to their beliefs; they not only rejected the views of the learned Dean, but looked upon him as one outside the Christian faith. This sudden upheaval of Modernism, and drastic departure from the established and time-honoured beliefs, is exciting great surprise and doubt, more especially in view of the fact that these deliberations of the modern Church do not give reasons to justify certain inferences. The Archbishop of York may, in his sermon already alluded to, judge the Church to be repulsive, but he keeps his audience in the dark as to the why and how of the case. Dean Inge, and most of the Churchmen with him, may declare the Church in the West to be an innovation of others, having nothing to do with Jesus; but the Dean of St. Paul's does not inform his fellow-Christians of the lime and mortar which the Apostle to the Gentiles, or others, used in building the superstructure of the Church which they attributed to Jesus. In short, although these ecclesiastics show a sort of suppressed abhorrence to Church tenets and practices, and have begun to rebuild it on new lines, revising the Book of Common Prayer, and curtailing the Divine Commandments, yet they are not inclined to enlighten the man in the street as to how the material they reject became part and parcel of the Catholic faith.

I, however, try here to make a humble attempt in this direction. I demand from my readers a patient and thoughtful perusal of these pages. I request my Christian friends to survey the whole situation, and consider the facts here stated. If they do find that most of the received doctrines, practices and sacred Christian festivals did originally belong to the Pagan world in their very form and shape centuries before Jesus appeared, while he himself seems to have no concern whatsoever with them, is it not time for his true followers to revise their belief, and see religious verities eye to eye with others, who are not of their persuasion? Religion, after all, is an individual concern—a matter of conscience; it should not be affected by any vulgar or mundane consideration. The world, as it stands, is at a critical juncture; ours are the days of reason and culture. Blind faith, blissful as it may be, should not be our guide, especially when the world is inclining towards universalism; the good of the human race depends chiefly upon unification, while religious differences are the chief factor of separation and discord. Undoubtedly it is their love for Jesus which till now has so tenaciously attached the Christians to the teachings of the Church; but if the perusal of these pages moves their honest judgment to see that their doctrinal

beliefs go contrary to Jesus, and divest him of all the beauty and glory to which he is rightly entitled, should they not discard them, simply out of respect and regard for that noble Personality, if not for other reasons? We Muslims are in no way behind others in our love for the great Nazarene, and the same love actuates me to write these pages in order to create a sort of reconciliation between his two sects of followers, the Muslims and the Christians.

Man in the whole creation has happened to be a worshipping animal. His advanced consciousness creates in him hope and fear to an extent unknown to other animals. These two passions make him bow before many man-made gods, if the true consciousness of religion has not dawned upon his nascent mind. Animism, Spiritism and then element-worship played a great rôle in this direction in ancient days, afterwards becoming merged in star-worship or sun-worship. This great luminary is, to the superficial eye, the primeval source of all life, the origin of all manifestation in the universe, the vivifier and resurrector of dead nature, the upbringer of all vegetation, the mover of all activities, and, in short, the bestower of all blessings. Would it, then, be a matter of surprise if the ancient world, with a mind not sufficiently developed to appreciate the true Deity, bowed down to the Supreme

Luminary, and became deeply affected by the various phases he underwent, making them occasions of their sorrows and rejoicings in the form of various festivals? Would they not be filled with fear and apprehension when this source of all life, through his light and warmth, began to decline—as it begins to do after the Autumnal Equinox—as if fallen within the clutches of the demon of darkness? He could not show his face as long as man wished or wanted him to show it, the night becoming longer and longer. His decline continued until it reached a climax on a certain day—the Winter Solstice. The god had gone to the lowest abyss of the underworld. But the change occurred, and the young God again came to the horizon to ascend, as if born again in the underground chamber. December 25th was thus taken in the sky-scripture to be the date of the birth of the Sun. Their joy would know no limit, as after that the God of Light would no longer be declining but would increase in his power, giving more heat and light each day. So he continued, but on a sudden he came to a standstill again. Till that day he was growing strong, and seemed to recover the whole loss; days were increased until they became of equal length with the night—the time of the Vernal Equinox. But now the Sun seems to be impeded in his pro-

gress. The demon of darkness will not allow him to go further; a great struggle ensues between the two deities, and the Lord of Light has perhaps succumbed to the Prince of Darkness. But lo! the fight ended, the God of Light comes victorious out of the fatal struggle, and Satan is defeated. A day of great rejoicing, the day of the victory of God over the Forces of Darkness. Is it, therefore, a matter of wonder and surprise if the days immediately following the Winter Solstice and Vernal Equinox—the Christmas and Easter of our days—became the days of great festivities, the day of the birth of the Sun-God and the day of his victory over the Prince of Darkness, in the whole pre-Christian world? It should not be forgotten that, in the language of the Zodiac, the Sun enters the sign of the Scorpion on September 23rd, when darkness prevails, and he is in the sign of the Ram at the time of the Spring Equinox, after which he is in his ascension. It was quite natural, then, if the Scorpion, with “his barbed tail,” in the terms of mythology, stood for the Prince of Darkness, and the Lamb—the Ram—for the God of Light, even before the birth of Jesus.

Sun-worship, unfortunately, was the most popular creed at the advent of Jesus in almost all the countries into which his religion was

introduced later on. The tree, when it was tender, was planted in a most uncongenial soil, and the propagation of the faith fell into hands unworthy of it; and that at a time when its true adherents had hardly become strong and competent in the truths inculcated by the Holy Teacher. Saul of Tarsus—the self-made apostle of the Gentiles—who was an implacable enemy to the Master and a persecutor of his followers in the lifetime of Jesus, had no chance to learn anything from him. A renegade from Judaism—the hatred of his own people left Saul, afterwards Paul, no chance to work among the lost tribes to reclaim whom only, Jesus had come. Paul was driven to the Gentiles, the people beyond the pale of the Hebraic law. He had no other resource, therefore, but to ignore the law when he had to work with those outside the law, and to observe it when with the people of the law, as he himself says: “To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without the law.”¹

The door of innovation, once opened, remained ajar for ever. A thoughtful study of the whole Pauline literature shows that his inspiration came from sources other than those

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.

of the real Christianity. The subsequent builders of the new Church so founded, found the Pauline method of incorporation from the current creed a most efficacious instrument to win favour for the new faith, and make it popular among the others. Within a few centuries the faith of the Master lost all its pristine beauty, and became one with the current cult. Is it, therefore, a matter of surprise if the Cambridge Conference of the Modernists in 1917 was of opinion that the Church of Christ, as it stands, was never founded by Jesus ?

The Mediterranean Sea was in those days a sort of lake, surrounded by countries under Roman rule ; all of which had the same religion practically. Though different parts of the then-known world were far asunder and separated from each other by natural barriers, yet they believed in the same faith, observed the same rites and celebrated the same festivals, more or less on the same dates. Curiously enough, they had the same traditions and the same mythology, the difference, as a matter of course, being in names. Asia, Europe and Africa, being contiguous to each other, could not fail to assimilate rites, rituals and beliefs from each other. But to his great surprise, Cortes, the first Spaniard to penetrate Mexico, found the same religion there in all its features.

In Peru and among the American Indians, north and south of the Equator, similar legends are, and were, to be found. This similarity has excited the wonderment of many a writer in the West. But the reason is obvious. The sun presents the same phenomenon everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere ; its phases are the same, and occur on the same date in each country. Its rise and decline create the same effect ; its appearance and disappearance, its weakness and its strength, must lead to the same phenomena and inspire the human imagination with the same ideas. Hence religions were the same everywhere. At the appearance of Jesus there were temples without end dedicated to gods like Apollo or Dionysus among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians, Adonis and Attis in Syria and Phrygia ; Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt ; Baal and Astarte among the Babylonians and Carthaginians, and so forth.

All these Deities were sun-gods, and of all or nearly all of them, as Edward Carpenter says, it was believed that :—

(1) They were born on or very near Christmas Day.

(2) They were born of a Virgin Mother.

(3) And in a cave or underground chamber.

(4) They led a life of toil for mankind.

(5) They were called by the names of Light-Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Saviour and Deliverer.

(6) They were, however, vanquished by the Powers of Darkness.

(7) They descended into Hell or the Underworld.

(8) They rose again from the dead, and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly World.

(9) They founded Communions of Saints and Churches, to which disciples were received by baptism.

(10) They were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

To elucidate the subject, I think I shall be justified if I sketch briefly an account of some of these Deities.

MITHRA.—Mithraism came from Persia, where it seems to have been flourishing for about six hundred years, the cult reaching Rome about 70 B.C. It spread through the Empire, and extended to Great Britain. Remains of Mithraic monuments have been discovered at York, Chester and other places. Mithra was believed to be a great *Mediator between God and man*. *His birth took place in a cave on December 25th. He was born of a virgin. He travelled far and wide; he had*

*twelve disciples; he died in the service of humanity. He was buried, but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection was celebrated with great rejoicing.*¹ His great festivals were the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox—Christmas and Easter. He was called *Saviour*, and sometimes figured as a *Lamb*. People were initiated into his cult through *baptism*. *Sacramental feasts* were held in his remembrance. These statements may excite surprise in the mind of the reader of to-day; he may be disposed to doubt their genuineness, as while on one side he reads the story of the Jesus of the Church, of the legend of Mithra on the other, Mithraism has left no traces in the world, though it was so powerful in the third century A.D. that, had it not been suppressed in Rome and Alexandria by the Christians with physical force, as has been admitted by St. Jerome, it would have left no chance for the flourishing of Christianity; and that it died only when most of its legends became incorporated in the simple faith of Jesus,² and the Church lore fully saturated with Mithraic colours, so much so that Tertullian had to admit the fact, though in a way befitting his position. He says that the learned in his days considered Mithraism and

¹ Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 338.

² *Ibid.* p. 350.

Christianity identical in all but name. St. Jerome and other Early Fathers became puzzled at the similarity existing between the two faiths, but their ingenuity ascribed it to the machinations of the Devil to mock their faith.

It will not be out of place if I quote certain of the observations made by these Early Fathers on the subject. They leave no room for any doubt or conjecture ; they, on the other hand, conclusively prove the case. The following is from Tertullian :—

“The Devil, whose business is to prevent the truth, mimicks the exact circumstances of the Divine Sacraments in the Mysteries of Idols. He himself *baptizes some*, that is to say, his believers and followers ; he promises *forgiveness of sins from the sacred fount*, and *thereby initiates them* into the religion of Mithra. Thus he marks the foreheads of his own soldiers, thus he celebrates the *oblation of bread* ; he brings in the symbol of *resurrection*, and wins the crown with the sword. He limits his chief priest to a single marriage, he even has his virgins and ascetics.”¹

Justin Martyr says :—

“The apostles, in the commentaries written by themselves which we call Gospels, have delivered down to us how that Jesus thus

¹ *Our Sun-God*, p. 179. Italics are mine.

commanded them: 'He having taken bread, after that he had given thanks, said: Do this in commemoration of Me; this is My body; also having taken the cup and returned thanks, He said: This is My blood, and delivered it unto them alone'; which things the evil spirit have taught to be done out of memory in the mysteries and ministrations of Mithra. . . . For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn."¹

Cortez, the explorer of Mexico, also complained that the Devil had positively taught to the Mexicans the same things which God taught to the Christians.

St. Jerome admits that Mithra and Baal were the same, and called sons of the Lord. He says: "The Sun whom the heathen worship under the names of Lord Sun (Baal Samus) and Son of the Lord (Bor Belus)."

In this connection I am tempted to say a few words as to the supposed date of the birth of Jesus.

Dean Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, has very rightly remarked that there are no satisfactory proofs to locate the birth of Jesus on December 25th. The Bible is silent on the subject, though it makes mention of the shepherds being that night with their flocks in the fields

¹ Justin Martyr, *Apol. II.*

of Bethlehem.¹ It makes it more difficult to accept December 25th as the real date of the Nativity, December being the height of the rainy season in Judæa, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been by night in the fields of Bethlehem. Uesener says that the Feast of the Nativity was held originally on January 6th (the Epiphany), but in A.D. 353-4 the Pope Liberius altered it to December 25th, but there is no evidence of a Feast of the Nativity taking place at all before the fourth century A.D. It was not until A.D. 534 that Christmas Day and Epiphany were reckoned by the law-courts as "Dies Non."²

The Greek Church, even to-day, does not observe Christmas on December 25th, but on January 7th. It was, however, not until the year A.D. 530 or thereabouts that a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot and astronomer, of Rome, was commissioned to fix the date and the year of the birth of Jesus.³ He it was who assigned the day, and the date and the month now accepted in Christendom. The said monk does not give the data that authorized him to fix December 25th as the day of the Nativity, but the very date, within a day or two, is the date of the supposed birth of many of the sun-gods.

¹ Hastings, *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics*, art. "Christmas."

² Ibid.

³ *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 26.

According to the Julian Calendar, *this date is the date of the Nativity of the Sun*. Mithra, as I have said elsewhere, was born on the same date. Osiris, the Egyptian sun-god, according to Plutarch, was born on the 27th, and Horus, another sun-god, on the 28th of the same month, and Apollo as well on the same date, all these being various conceptions of the Sun-God in different countries where the worship of the sun was the popular creed, and the dates follow the Winter Solstice, when the sun, after reaching the lowest declension, begins to ascend again, being appropriate for his birth.

There are some other dates as well, in the Catholic Calendar, that give rise to the same presumption, that sky-scriptures, and not the Sacred Scriptures, are to be searched for their origin. Such are the Assumption of the Virgin; her Nativity, Annunciation and Purification, the birthday of John the Baptist, Candlemas and Lent. The Assumption of the Virgin—the Festival in honour of the miraculous ascent of Mary to heaven—occurs on August 15th, the date of the total disappearance of the Zodiacal sign Virgo into the rays of the Sun, as if taken away to heaven and disappearing from the human eye. The Nativity of the Virgin, again, takes place on September 7th, the very day when the same cluster, Virgo, reappears on the horizon. As to

the connection between the Zodiacal sign and the Virgin, I will speak later. The word "Lent," that comes from the German *Lenz*, meaning "Spring," clearly shows why the festival in the Christian calendar comes in the days of spring. The Annunciation of the Virgin—the Angel's salutation to the Virgin—occurs on March 25th, the day after the Spring Equinox. The day was to be fixed as a consequence of the day of Nativity being assigned to December 25th. Candlemas is the Festival of the Purification of the Virgin, which takes place on February 2nd, corresponding to the similar pagan festival of *Juno Februata* (Purified). It took place in the same month in Roman days, and included candle processions. The day allotted for the birth of John the Baptist is the day of the Autumnal Equinox. If Jesus had to represent the Sun in ascension, and his cousin the Sun in declension, the dates of their respective births could not better be chosen. After Christmas the Sun increases in his light and warmth, and after June 23rd, the birthday of John the Baptist, he decreases. The force of these remarks becomes much more strengthened when we consider the following words, which the writer of John iii. 30 attributes to the Baptist: "He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease."

The Protestant Church does not recognize

these ceremonies, but the religion reached them through hands that had to grapple with sun-worship, and they saw their victory in incorporating most of the current cult into their own faith in order to make it a popular religion.

The rebirth of the Sun on December 25th from a Virgin womb—and in like manner the birth of all Sun-Gods, Mithra, Osiris, Horas, Bacchus—is the theme of many a legend of the olden days. The Greeks, in the worship of Mithra at Rome, used to celebrate the birth of the luminary by a midnight service, coming out of the inner shrine and crying: “The Virgin has brought forth, the light is waxing.”¹

At the commencement of the Christian Era the Zodiacal constellation upon the eastern horizon was the sign Virgo. The constellation has always been represented by a woman with a sheaf of corn in her hand. On the Globe of Abuzar, the famous Arabian astronomer, the Virgin with the child has been portrayed with the same cluster. The figures of the infant Saviour Horus and his Virgin Mother were also found on the margin of the Alexandrian Calendar, close to the same sign. The interior of the dome of the Temple of Denderah exhibited a map of the northern hemisphere of the sky and Zodiac, where again on the margin,

¹ Dr. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ii. p. 4.

close by the said constellation, stands a figure of Isis with Horus in her arms. This all goes to show that the Egyptians, as well as the other ancient astronomers, did recognize some connection between Virgo and the Virgin. The Virgo cluster being on the eastern horizon at the birth of the Sun, led to the idea of the birth of the deity from the Virgin Mother.

I saw the figure of Isis with the Sacred Infant in the Municipal Museum of Alexandria, and there I also found the figure of the Madonna and the Child, the only difference between the two being that Horus was on the knees of Isis, while the Child was in the arms of the Virgin. The temples of the two Mother Goddesses stood side by side in Alexandria in the fourth century of the Christian Era. The two ladies, though rivals to each other, received almost equal homage from the Christians and the Pagans of the day, their temples being equally frequented by the votaries of the two faiths.

The Emperor Hadrian, in a letter to Ser-
vianus concerning the inhabitants of Alex-
andria, remarks that "those who worship
Serapis are likewise Christians; even those
who style themselves the bishops of the Christ
are devoted to Serapis (*Vosipiacus vit. Saturni-*
nus). Serapis was another conception of the
Sun-God, as Macrobius tells us in the following

words : “ The city of Alexandria pays almost frantic worship to Serapis and Isis ; nevertheless, they show that all this veneration is merely offered to the Sun.” We read nothing of the Madonna and the Child, either in the evangelical record or in the writings of Paul and other apostles. The conception most assuredly came from Alexandria to the Western world, where the Mother Goddess with the Child Redeemer Horus had been honoured centuries before the Christian Era, and worshipped under the names of “ Our Lady,” “ Queen of Heaven,” “ Mother Goddess ” and so forth—words that were afterwards used in reference to Mary, the Mother Goddess.

Isis was not the only Virgin Mother worshipped in the olden days. Osiris had also been believed to be born of Neith, the Virgin of the World, as the Egyptians called her, before Isis came to take her place. The sacred groves of Germany exhibited the image of the Goddess Hertha, a Virgin with a Child in her arms, in the old Teutonic days. She also gave birth to a child that was of Immaculate Conception. She was impregnated by the Heavenly Spirit.

Frigga conceived of the All-Father, Odin, bore a son, Balder of Scandinavia, called the Healer and Saviour of mankind.¹

¹ R. P. Knight, *Ancient Art and Mythology*, p. 22.

The force of Cortez's remark quoted elsewhere becomes significant when we read the following in Kingsborough's famous book, *Antiquities of Mexico* :—

An ambassador was sent from heaven on an embassy to a Virgin of Tulan, called Chimalman . . . announcing that it was the will of God that she should conceive a son without connection with man, and having delivered her the message, he rose and left the house ; and as soon as he had left it, she conceived a son, without connection with man, who was called Quetzalcoatl, who, they say, is the god of air. Further, it is explained that Quetzalcoatl sacrificed himself, drawing forth his own blood with thorns, and that the word Quetzalcoatl means “ our well-beloved son.”¹

I think I have said enough to enable my readers to understand that the conception of the virgin-born God and the other features of the Christian mysteries cannot safely be ascribed to Divine origin. Pagan literature is so full of it as to leave no doubt of itself being the origin of the Church mysteries. The Virgin Mother suckling her Child is a common figure on the Mithraic monuments. So are other legends of these gods being born in a cave, which have been reported from Guatemala, the Antilles and other places in Central America.²

The Chinese had also a Mother Goddess Virgin, with a child in her arms.³ The ancient

¹ *Antiquities of Mexico*, vol. vi. p. 176.

² *Ethnograph. Amerika*, Leipzig, 1867, vol. i. p. 758.

³ Rev. J. B. Gross, *Heathen Religion*, p. 60.

Etruscans had the same.¹ In this connection Justin Martyr again comes with the same interesting apology when writing to the Emperor Adrian, the Devil being the only prop on which he could lay hands to strengthen him in his beliefs. He says :—

It having reached the Devil's ears that the prophets had foretold the coming of Christ (the Son of God), he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The Devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables related of the sons of Jove. . . . By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, Our Master Jesus, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, we (Christians) say no more in this than what you (Pagans) say of those whom you style the sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vogue among you assign to Jove. . . . As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be no more than man, yet the title of the son of God is very justifiable, upon account of his wisdom, considering that you (Pagans) have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Word, a messenger of God. . . . As to his (Jesus) being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that. . . . if Jupiter could send a parcel of sons out of virgin mothers ; the Father in heaven assuredly could do the same at least in our case.²

The ancient literature of India also speaks of Virgin Mothers and their sons being worshipped.

¹ Inman, *Pagan and Christian Symbolism*, p. 27.

² Adol, I. Ch. xxii.

The Gospel of St. Matthew no doubt makes the birth of Jesus a fulfilment of a prophecy by Isaiah,¹ which it quotes in the following words: "Behold a *virgin* shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."² But the oldest manuscripts of Isaiah do not read "virgin," but "young woman." And the original is not "shall conceive," but "is with child"—i.e. had already conceived. Moreover, it does not state that "they shall call" his name Emmanuel or Immanuel, but "thou shalt," it being a command to King Ahaz so to call a child about to be born; which child, as an encouragement to the King, Isaiah prophesied would be a boy, and therefore a sign of good luck. And the Child was called—Jesus.

"The fact that in the later versions of the Hebrew, such as the Septuagint and Vulgate, the word used for 'young woman' has been altered into 'virgin' is very significant. The misrepresentation of Isaiah's reference to a young woman, who, at the time the prophet spoke, was about to bear a child . . . is clear evidence of an attempt to connect a presumably real Jesus with the Sun-God," all of whose other incarnations came from a Virgin Mother. The other circumstances mentioned in connec-

¹ Isa. vii: 14.

² Matt. i. 23.

tion with the birth of Jesus lead to the same conclusion.

In other Gospels, Jesus is represented as being born in a stable, that stable being, according to some, in a cave. This is a reference to the fact that at the time of the birth of the Sun, the constellation directly under the earth was that of Capricornis, which was also called the stable of Augeas. Hence the saying of the Fathers that the Christ came as a second Hercules to clear out the stables of Augeas.¹

We are told that the Magi came from the east in search of a king whose star they had seen in the east, and that star went before them and stood over where the young child was. Christians say that these Magi were three kings.

Now if, on a clear evening, about the commencement of a new year, we look eastward, we see the most glorious of all the constellations mounting the sky. And the three stars so conspicuously set together in Orion's belt, are pointing downwards to the east from which they came, as if signifying the advent of a marvel. "And the marvel comes. For in a direct line with those three stars, Sirius, the brightest of all the Host of Heaven, is soon seen rising in the East." ²

¹ *Our Sun-God*, p. 148.

² *Ibid.* pp. 149, 150.

The Egyptians used to set their Calendar by the heliacal rising of Sirius, and the Dog Star was accordingly known as the Herald of the Sun. And the old name given to the three stars in the belt of Orion was that of *the three Kings*. It was therefore true that the three Kings had “seen His star in the East,” the herald proclaiming the advent of the “King of Kings.” In the face of these facts of sky-scriptures—and they are facts, and not mere theories and conjectures—the birth of the Sun on December 25th from the Virgin Mother—the appearance of the Virgo—Virgin—at that time on the eastern horizon (the constellation under the earth being Capricorn, called the stable of Augeas), and the rising of Sirius with three stars in Orion’s belt called three kings; could there be any doubt that the writers of the Synoptic Gospels received their inspiration more from the Mithraic cult than from the Holy Ghost, when they gave us the story of the birth of Jesus? The inference becomes conclusive when we find the phraseology of the Church in the West to be derived altogether from the same source.

I need not give here a detailed account of the other Sun-Gods, but I will mention some of the distinctive features in their stories which have a special bearing on certain of the Church beliefs. Osiris was born on Decem-

ber 29th. He was a *great traveller*. He tamed people *by gentleness* and not by force. He discovered corn *and wine*. He was *betrayed by Typhon, slain and dismembered*. He was *interred, but came again to life*. In the Mysteries of Osiris, his Image was placed in a box and brought forth before the worshippers with cries of "*Osiris is risen!*"

Adonis, the Syrian God, born of a Virgin, was killed and rose again in the spring. Every year *the maidens wept for Adonis* (Ezekiel viii. 14), *and then rejoiced over his resurrection*. Attis, the Phrygian God, was also born of a Virgin named Nana. He was bled to death at the foot of a pine-tree. *His blood renewed the fertility of the earth, and thus brought a new life to humanity*. He also rose from the dead. . . . In celebrating his death and resurrection, his image was fastened to a pine-tree on March 24th, and the day was called the "*Day of Blood*," since on that day the deity was bled to death. The Image was then laid in a tomb with wailing and mourning, but the coming night changed sorrow to joy. The tomb was *found to be empty on the next day, when the festival of the resurrection was celebrated*. These mysteries seem to have included a sacramental meal and a baptism of blood.¹

Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican Saviour, was

¹ Dr. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, iv. p. 229.

born of a Virgin, Chimalman. The Virgin Mother received the message of being the Mother of a Son without any connection with man, through an embassy from heaven. She conceived. Quetzalcoatl—the word in that language means “our beloved son”—also fasted forty days, and was tempted. He was crucified, when the sun was darkened and withheld its light. His second coming was looked for so eagerly that when Cortez appeared the Mexicans greeted him as the returning God.¹

Bacchus, sometimes called Dionysius, was born of a virgin named Demeter on December 25th. Her other name was Semele.

Evil having spread over the earth, the God of Gods was begged to save mankind. Jupiter hearkened to the prayer, and declared that *his son will redeem the world from its misery*. He promised a *Liberator* to the earth, and Bacchus came as *the Saviour*. He was called *the only begotten son*. “It is I,” so says the Lord Bacchus to mankind, “who guide you ; it is I who protect you, and who save you ; I who am Alpha and Omega.”² He was also a great traveller, and brought the gift of wine to mankind. It will remind the reader of the first miracle of Jesus when he converted water into wine. “Suffering was common to all the

¹ Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i. p. 60.

² See Beausobre, also Higgin’s *Anacalypsis*, vol. i. p. 322.

sons of Jove," as Justin Martyr says, and for this reason they were called "The Slain Ones," "Saviours" and "Redeemers." Bacchus was also slain for redeeming humanity, and was therefore called "The Slain One," "The Sin Bearer," "The Redeemer." His death, followed by resurrection, was celebrated with festivities of a horrible nature. Then was celebrated the representation of *the passion of Bacchus, dead, descended into hell and re-
arisen*. Years ago, I could not understand why the birthday of the Prince of Righteousness and an ascetic, as Jesus was, could be celebrated in the mode in which it has been celebrated in Christendom from mediæval times. But if the story of Bacchus—like those of other Sun-Gods—be indeed the genesis of the story of Jesus, it is not improbable that a portion of the Bacchanalian orgies found its way into the Christmas festivities in certain quarters.

If these stories existed in the various cults of the Sun-Gods, a fact not only discovered but admitted by Tertullian, St. Jerome, Justin Martyr and others at the very time when the Mithraic and other sister religions of the sun-worship were at their prime in countries where Christianity had been introduced first, one might be excused for inclining towards scepticism and confessing inability to accept the genuineness of the Gospel story of Jesus.

History, no doubt, repeats events ; coincidence may occur in some instances, in the actions and words of great men (as in the case of Jesus and Buddha) ; but the repetition, or coincidence of almost all the distinctive points of Christ's life with those in the lives of the Sun-Gods are too numerous and curious to admit of such explanation. I have already said that the similarity between the various cults of star- and nature-worship is natural enough. The various phenomena and phases of nature, including the sun, are, and will be, the same ; and they occur on the same dates everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere. The various founders of the Pagan mysteries may be distinctly located—one in Mexico and Peru, and the other in Persia and Ireland—with no means of communication and transmission between them ; they may be separated by the impassable barriers of the olden days, but their hearts will throb with the same impulses. They will feel and imagine in the same manner, and formulate their impressions in the same terms. Had Jesus been one of the Sun-Gods, as he has been most unfortunately portrayed by some of his zealous followers—the builders of the Church in the early days—the position is quite tenable. But this great Messenger of Allah came to demolish Paganism, as the Qur-án says. His Church says the same.

His story should be quite different and distinct from that of the deities of the ancient days. Let St. Augustine speak: "We hold this (Christmas) day holy, not like the Pagans, because of the birth of the Sun, but because of the birth of Him who made it." And there are many other animadversions of the early Fathers, cursing the Devil for introducing into his cult almost all the Church mysteries, as shown above. This does not explain the case. On the other hand, it points to the real genesis of the Church mysteries. In some of the Gospels, Jesus is reported to have been born in a stable, and the others say that the stable was in a cave. The stable of Augeas was also said to be in a cave—a poetic representation of the dome of heaven. In those days the constellation directly under the earth at the Winter Solstice was that of Capricorn, which was also called the Stable of Augeas. The fact has been admitted, in a way, by Justin Martyr when he says that the birth of Jesus in the stable was foreshadowed by the birth of Mithra in the cave of Zoroastrianism. But others see the reverse of his proposition when they read the two events in the light of chronology. It may befit him to say that Christ was born when the sun takes its birth in the Augean stable, coming as a second Hercules to cleanse a foul world. Yet Hercules, after

all, was not an historical personality, but a mythical conception of the Sun-worship cult. Moreover, the other points of resemblance of the Christian mysteries with those of the sky-scriptures are too conspicuous to admit of the explanation with which the Early Fathers satisfied scepticism. The birth of almost all the Sun-Gods—Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Mithra, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Horus, Baal, Quetzalcoatl—from Virgin Mothers, and on the same date, or within a day or two thereof; the massacre of the innocents at that time and the flight into a distant country (the same we read of the Indian God Krishna); the death through crucifixion or otherwise, but always by the enemies of light and for the benefit of humanity; the coming of the weeping virgins to the grave; the empty grave; the resurrection; almost all of the gods accepted as redeemers of mankind and mediators between man and God; the number of their disciples or of their works—twelve—the number of the Zodiacal signs or of months the same; the betrayal by one of the twelve—the sign at the entry into which the declination of the sun reaches its climax; the figure of the serpent, or scorpion as symbol of their enemy—the scorpion being the Zodiacal sign—the entry of the sun into which causes its declination. Again, some of the Church festivals strengthen

the presumption likely to arise from the above coincidences—Candlemas, Lent, the Nativity of the Virgin, her Assumption and Annunciation, all these festivals of the Catholic Calendar being celebrated on the same date and in nearly the same way as in the olden days.

I have arrayed all these facts for thoughtful perusal and considered judgment ; but before a Christian friend tries to come to any conclusion, I may be allowed to refer him to the recent discoveries made from the Babylonian ruins, which throw a flood of light on the Passion story of the Lord of Christianity and its genesis. My indebtedness in this respect goes to my friend, Mr. Mead, the learned editor of the *Quest*—the well-known London quarterly journal—who has most ably dealt with this subject in his usual lucid manner.

The Dying God has been the popular theme of many an ancient legend, where a God-man gives his life and blood for the people. Man likes to shift his burden to other's shoulders, and the suffering God, suffering for the human race, has always appealed to his imagination. The Holy Qur-án exposed the error, which seriously affects human activities. The Book says :—

And a burdened soul cannot bear the burden of another ; and if one weighed down by burden should

cry for (another to carry) its burden, not aught of it shall be carried, even though he be near of kin. *You warn* only those who fear their Lord in secret and keep up prayer; and whoever purifies himself, he purifies himself only for (the good of) his own soul; and to Allah is the eventual coming.¹

The story of the Lord of Christianity is not the first of its kind. The passion play of Baal, the Babylonian Sun-God, was in existence centuries before the birth of Jesus. It was acted as a popular mystery drama. The Jews were taken as prisoners by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, where they remained for generations. They saw the mystery drama acted every year in the beginning of spring on Easter Day. The captives, on their return, brought with them many traditions of sun-worship, which one can easily trace in Jewish literature. They could not fail to have vivid memories and impressions of the passion play of Baal. The main features of the play have recently been deciphered from some tablets discovered from Babylonian ruins. There are two Babylonian tablets, says the *Quest*, belonging to the cuneiform documents which were discovered by the German excavators in 1903-1904 at Kalah Shargat, the site of the ancient Assur. They belonged to the library of Assur, formed in the ninth

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xxxv. 18.

century B.C. or even earlier. They are, however, copies of still earlier Babylonian tablets.

The tablets disclose astounding facts, perturbing thousands of honest minds in Christendom. It is not the similarity of some of the features between the two stories, the story of Jesus and the story of Baal, that excites their astonishment. The two are one and the same. It therefore not only deprives the evangelical records of the claim to be genuine; it makes them complete plagiarism. Let my readers decide the point for themselves. I quote the following from the January 1922 issue of the *Quest* :—

THE BABYLONIAN PASSION
PLAY.

Bēl is taken prisoner.

Bēl is tried in the House
on the Mount (the Hall of
Justice).

Bēl is smitten (wounded).

Bēl is led away to the
Mount.

Together with Bēl a malefactor is led away and put to death. Another, who is also charged as a malefactor, is let go, thus not taken away with Bēl.

THE CHRISTIAN PASSION
STORY.

Jesus is taken prisoner.

Jesus is tried in the
House of the High Priest
and the Hall of Pilate.

Jesus is scourged.

Jesus is led away to
crucifixion on Golgotha.

Together with Jesus, two malefactors are led away and put to death. Another (Barabbas) is released to the people, and thus not taken away with Jesus.

After Bēl had gone to the Mount, the city breaks out into tumult, and fighting takes place in it.

Bēl's clothes are carried away.

A woman wipes away the heart's blood of Bēl flowing from a drawn-out weapon (? spear).

Bēl goes down into the Mount away from sun and light, disappears from life, and is held fast in the Mount as in a prison.

Guards watch Bēl imprisoned in the stronghold of the Mount.

A goddess sits with Bēl ; she comes to tend him.

They seek for Bēl where he is held fast. In particular a weeping woman seeks for him at the "Gate of

At the death of Jesus, the veil in the temple is rent (Synopt.), the earth quakes, the rocks are rent asunder, the graves are opened, and the dead come forth into the holy city (Matt.).

Jesus' robe is divided among the soldiers (Synopt., John, cp. Ps. xxii. 18).

The lance-thrust in Jesus' side and outflow of water and blood (John). Mary Magdalene and two other women busy themselves with the (washing, and) embalming of the body (Mark, Luke).

Jesus, in the grave, in the rock tomb (Synopt.), goes down into the realm of the dead (1 Pet. iii. 19, Matt. xii. 40, Acts ii. 24, Rom. x. 17, "descent into hell" dogma).

Guards are set over the tomb of Jesus (Matt.).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit before the tomb (Matt., Mark).

Women, in particular Mary Magdalene, came to the tomb to seek Jesus where he is behind the

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Burial." When he is being carried away the same lamented: "O, my brother ! O, my brother !"

Bēl is again brought back to life (as the sun of spring), he comes again out of the Mount.

His chief feast, the Babylonian New Year's festival in March at the time of the spring equinox, is celebrated also as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. the creation hymn "Once when on high" as the New Year's festival hymn.

door of the tomb. Mary stands weeping before the empty tomb because they have taken her Lord away (John).

Jesus' restoration to life, his rising from the grave (on a Sunday morning).

His festival, approximately at the spring equinox, is also celebrated as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. e.g. Col. ii. 15).

Is not the Biblical story a recast of the story of Bēl? Apart from the similarity of the details, the very occurrence of the crucifixion in the way narrated in the Bible seems now to be fictitious. The Qur-án denies the event in the clearest terms. It would, indeed, seem to lack independent evidence. We owe all our knowledge of Jesus to the Bible, before the revelation of the Holy Qur-án; there are, however, two other pieces of evidence: first, a reference to the crucifixion in the history of Josephus, a contemporary of Jesus; and secondly, a letter alleged to have been written

by Pilate to the Roman Emperor, speaking of the crucifixion. This letter exists in the archives of the Vatican, but both these testimonies seem to be inadmissible. The original MS. of Josephus does not contain the page referring to Jesus, which is admitted to be a subsequent insertion; the letter of Pilate, with the signature on it as well, is now considered a pious fraud. Thus we are left no other course than to rely on the Bible and the Holy Qur-án. The last Book of God totally denies the event, and the Bible story is only a remoulding of the Babylonian legend, which is decidedly a myth of the Sun-worship. Apart from the verdict of the Holy Qur-án, could any person accept the Gospel story as original, in the name of honesty and truth, after reading the contents of the said tablets? Besides, the multiplicity of the various events recorded to complete the Gospel story, makes it a physical impossibility. From the Last Supper, up to the Crucifixion, all events have been recorded in one night—the agony in the Garden, the betrayal by Judas, Jesus brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, and then to the Hall of Judgment, the intermediate visit to Herod and coming again to Pilate, who speaks and washes his hands; the scourging, the mocking of Jesus arrayed in purple, and the crown of thorns, the

preparation of a cross, and the painful journey to Golgotha.

Events, with characters coming out of the "green room" or on the film, may receive their full development within a few hours, but when they actually occur they must take some reasonable time; and it is a matter of surprise, as Edward Carpenter thinks, to find the trial of Jesus in the middle of the night, as courts do not generally sit to try malefactors at that hour of the night. But if the story was taken from the Babylonian mystery play, the multiplicity of the events within the short space of night, and the time of night chosen for their occurrence, afford us an explanation. The date of the crucifixion is another stumbling-block in the way of a seeker after truth, because he finds the date of Good Friday to correspond closely with the date of the Passions of the various deities, and so it is with the time of the resurrection. No doubt we find its mention in the Gospel as occurring near the date of the Passover Feast. But it was a time-honoured date in the Pagan world.

The movable nature of the Church Easter, occurring as it does in March or April, according to the moon phases, makes it still more doubtful. The date, had it any connection with such a remarkable event as the Resurrection, must have been fixed. But if the

festival arose from the rise of the vegetation depending upon certain phases and seasons of the luminaries—as both the Sun and the Moon play a great part in this phenomenon—the reasons for the festival occurring on changing dates is obvious. It must occur after the full Moon.

Easter (Anglo-Saxon, Eostre, O. H. G. Ostera) was the goddess of Light and Spring, in whose honour the festival was celebrated everywhere at the said dates. Hot cross-buns and eggs were distributed and eaten in Egypt and Ireland, in the same way as is done now in Christendom, at the time of Easter. This, again, shows the descent of the Church Easter from the olden days. The whole of Nature is risen again at Easter time, and a new life is coming to humanity. Do we not find the same story in the Church-covering—Easter Sunday being the day of the resurrection of the Lord that brought new life to the human race? Some of the Western writers are of opinion that the Passover Feast of the Jews, besides being held to commemorate the crossing of the Red Sea, was taken from the Sun-worship festival celebrated on the day when the sun crosses the Equator.

The presumption becomes stronger, when many other things in the Jewish traditions are traced to Sun-worship.

The sun was the Dying God of the ancient world. After his birth on December 25th the young deity increases every day in his power and strength, and defies the demon of darkness in the struggle, till the final week in March comes, when his progress is retarded and he becomes stationary. The struggle between the two seems to have come to a climax, and the devil appears to be going to have the better of the conflict. Therefore it is a time of great anxiety and apprehension—a day of mourning and weeping for the maidens of Adonis; the suffering God undergoing his last ordeal; Hercules gone into Hades; Attis nailed down to a pine-trunk—in short, the dead God is interred in the tomb, but two days after, all sorrow and weeping change into merriment, the Sun-God overcoming the forces of darkness (the Rubicon, i.e. the Equator, passed); Hercules ascending from the underworld; Adonis, Attis, Dionysus and Baal risen from their respective tombs. The date of the Dying God and that of the Rising God, therefore, become great events, and are attended respectively with mourning and rejoicing—just as we find on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

I do not write in a poetical vein. These are historical realities. India, for centuries the home of star-worship, sun and moon-worship being conspicuous in it, still furnishes a good

illustration to substantiate these remarks. Even to-day the eclipses of the sun and moon stir the Hindu mind with the same anxieties and apprehensions as those experienced in olden days in countries of the Sun-worship from Persia to Mexico and Peru. Let the Arya Samaj—the Modernist movement in Hinduism—explain the phenomenon in any way it chooses, the fact remains as it did in pre-Islamic India. Millions of Hindus leave their houses and go to the river-sides when the eclipses begin. The Hindu mendicants and Brahmins cry for alms and receive it from door to door; the gods of light are, as the Brahmins say, in the clutches of the Demon of Darkness; hence the anxiety. Alms and prayers are requisitioned to help the deities in their struggle with the demon, until the eclipse is finished and rejoicing begins. Here is a remnant of ancient India, but a standing illustration of the cause of sorrow and rejoicing attending the two dates—the beginning and the ending times of the Vernal Equinox of the ancients—the Good Friday and Easter Sunday of the moderns.

The sign of the Cross also is not of Christian origin. It does not date from the crucifixion. Clement, in his list of Christian symbols, does not make mention of it. Constantine saw the Cross in his vision, as he says, and took it as

a symbol of the faith. But what he saw in the vision he must have seen also in a normal condition with his waking eye, for the Cross was the sign of life in the Pagan symbolism. I saw an ancient Egyptian cross in July last when I visited Alexandria, in the Municipal Museum in the town. Curiously enough, the cross in Christendom signifies the same as did the Egyptian cross—the sign of new life brought by the crucifixion. In Ireland a similar cross has been discovered, with a crucified effigy, but it is the effigy of a Persian prince and not that of the Nazarene, as the head of the crucified bears a Parthian coronet and not the crown of thorns; which identifies it with the Mithraic cult, originally from Persia. It left many other signs in Ireland and Cheshire.

The first royal convert may have chosen to put forward his adoption of the Cross as the sign of his new religions, but the fact remains that Apollo was his patron deity, and remained so throughout his life, as the seal and coinage of Constantine shows. Till his death he kept the inscription on both, in honour of the Sun-God. It is Sun-worship, and his Sun-worship predilections, therefore, that were more responsible for the adoption of the Cross than his vision.

The Vernal Equinox occurs at a time when the sun in his ecliptic revolution, as it passes the Equator, makes the shape of a cross. It

has also been ascertained that, owing to the precession of the Equinoxes, the crossing point of the ecliptic was different from what it is now. Some three thousand years ago, the point where the ecliptic crossed the Equator was, as a matter of fact, in the region of the constellation Aries, or the He-Lamb.

The triumph of the Sun-God was, therefore, and quite naturally, ascribed to the influence of *Aries*. *The Lamb became the symbol of the Rising Saviour, and of his passage from the underworld into the height of heaven.*¹

The adoption of the Cross and the Lamb in the ancient cult does not, therefore, lack explanation. Justin Martyr could not deny the fact. It descended to the Christian Church, which came to replace the old faith in all its distinctive features. Read the history of the Early Fathers, and you are more and more convinced that while the Church was using sword and fire in destroying every trace and memory of Sun-worship in its original form—as in the burning of the Alexandrian Library and the killing of Hypatia—the great teacher of the Sun-worship cult—it was taking everything and anything of the heathen days into its own teachings and traditions in order to make the new faith popular. Fish was taken as a Christian symbol before the introduction of

¹ *Pagan and Christian Creed*, p. 39.

the Cross. This fish represented Jesus, and the ancient tomb inscriptions of the mediæval days bore the Fish, and not the Cross. The Gospel cannot explain the why and how of the Fish symbol, excepting that Jesus often ate fish. But the sun-scripture is the real explanation. The sun passes the Zodiacal sign Pisces—the Fish—in February, and if the date of the Epiphany is in February, Christ, as a Sun-God, must be symbolized by the Fish.

The evidence that the Church, as built by the priests of the dark mediæval days, owes everything to the Pagan world, and not to the sacred name under which it passes, is so overwhelmingly preponderating in nature that one becomes compelled to say with full justification, in the words of the Archbishop of York, that the Church repels. If the laity has realized that in their worship in the Church they are worshipping only the Sun-God, and keeping up the tradition of the Pagan cult, will they not resent it? No wonder the pews have become empty, and the clergy have no chance but to address empty benches. The situation has become serious; the Church-religion is at its lowest ebb, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is thinking of means to keep “the strayed flock within the pale”—a very laudable object. A conference was held in June last at Canterbury to this end, and

the Archbishop took part in it. His Grace was of opinion that unity between the various sections of the Church would solve the problem. But such unity, if secured, will not lure the people from the cricket and football fields, nor yet from the golf links, to the House of God. The trouble lies elsewhere. How are they to explain those Church mysteries? People have become anxious as to the how and why of the striking resemblance, or rather sameness, existing between the religion of Jesus and the cults of Sun-worship. Are they worshipping the Sun or Jesus? His Grace cannot afford to refer the modern mind to the explanation given by the Early Fathers, quoted elsewhere in these pages. Everything seems to descend from Sun-worship. But if we accept the explanation of Tertullian and Justin Martyr, why do we call the old creeds Pagan? In the received significance of the word should not Christianity receive the same name? Religion, after all, consists of doctrine, tenets, traditions and beliefs. If the necessary ingredients of the two religions are the same, as shown in these pages, why curse one and bless the other? If the mystic part of Christianity is necessary to uplift humanity, especially the Sacrament—the institution of the Holy Communion—it was so in the ancient cult. Are we not, then, justified in paying the same

reverence to the ancient religions, and in respecting the Pagan Baptism and Eucharist ceremony, as people in Christendom are bidden by the Church to do in order to be good Christians? If these were the essentials of religion from God, then they existed before the advent of Jesus.

Those who were the wardens of the Church in those days never failed to do two things, until Christianity fully triumphed over the existing creed. If, on one side, they incorporated almost all of the popular cult into their faith, on the other they did, in fact, take particular pains to destroy and burn the Pagan records and libraries—amongst them that of Alexandria some fifty years after the death of Constantine—in order to obliterate the origin of the faith so alien to that of Jesus. Copernicus could not do better service in this direction to this Christo-Pagan Church, to which he belonged, than to introduce his solar system, and substitute it for the Ptolemaic, a mere reference to which system would easily show the origin of most of the Christian mysteries, and the dates of the Church festivals. There were several treatises setting forth the religion of Mithra, but “every one of these has been destroyed,” says Robertson¹ by the care of the Church, and it is remarkable that even

¹ *Pagan Christs*, p. 325.

the treatise of Firmicus is mutilated at a passage (V) where he seems to be accusing Christians of following Mithraic usage. In this respect, Professor Murray says, "the polemic literature of Christianity is everywhere triumphant, the books of the Pagans have been *destroyed*."

Is this the grand object which is engaging the attention of the Archbishop? It should also be remembered that the policy of incorporating the views and beliefs of renegades from the Church will not prove useful in the long run—as, for example, the introduction of spiritualistic phenomena. Indirect efforts have been made by some of the clergy in this direction. It is only a repetition of the old tactics. But ours are different days. The task is not only cumbersome, but thankless too. The number of the newly arisen creeds is increasing. In the beginning of mediæval days there was only one cult. Besides, the new platforms differ—some of them diametrically—from each other. They have almost lost their faith in the Godhood and Atonement of Christ. The best way is to brush aside all these mysteries and philosophies, which were never taught by Jesus, but did exist in the heathen world before him. Jesus, redeemed from all that Paul, Constantine and the Early Fathers fathered on him, is still, and will for ever be, a beautiful

and lovable personality, as the Holy Qur-án describes him :—

He [Jesus] said : Surely I am a servant of Allah ; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet : and He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live : and dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed : and peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.

Such is Jesus son of Mary ; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute. It becoms not Allah that He should take to Himself a son, glory be to Him ; when He has decreed a matter He only says to it “ Be,” and it is. And surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him ; this is the right path.¹

He [Jesus] was naught but a servant on whom We bestowed favour, and We made him an example for the children of Israel.²

Now I come to the Church's Sabbath. The Sabbath of Jesus was the Sabbath of the Jews. He was a Jewish Rabbi and Teacher among them, as admitted by Dean Inge in the paper read to the Modernist Conference at Cambridge in 1917. Jesus would refer his disciple to the scribes for the religious lore. He was averse to any schism or innovation in the faith. He would have heaven and earth pass away but not allow a jot or tittle of change in the faith and its observances. Saturday was the day of Sabbath, and not Sunday, which was the day of the worship of Apollo the Sun-God. How

¹ Holy Qur-án, xix. 30-36.

² Ibid. xliii. 59.

and why the sacred day of the God of the Israelites, to be observed as one of the Ten Commandments, gave way to the day of the Pagan God—perhaps through St. Paul's or Constantine's instrumentality—is a mystery, but open enough to admit of easy explanation in the light of the multitude of facts, some of which have been already dealt with.

The Romans respected almost every faith under their rule, and contributed to the building of temples of all creeds, a wise policy to hold the mind of the subject race. The British Government, though proud to consider itself as resembling the Roman Empire, lacks, however, much of its wisdom. This was one of the many wise policies of the Romans. The Emperor Hadrian intended to build a temple to the Christ, and to rank him in the number of the gods (Lampridius I. 43). This intention was carried out by his successor, Constantine, whose patron God was Apollo. He retained Apollo's figure upon his seal, even after establishing Christianity as the State religion—a representation of the sun, with the inscription "To the Invincible Sun, my Companion." The conversion of Constantine to Christianity was more a political adventure than a search after truth. His murder of his nephew, and his despotic disposition as a ruler, could not find favour with his equals,

the senators. He had to go to the plebeians, most of whom were Christians. But he could not go against the popular faith to which he himself was so tenaciously attached. He, however, solved the problem in a most diplomatic way. He took the name of Jesus as a figure-head, and recognized the title "Christ" as but another name for the Sun-God; in all other respects he kept the Pagan Church intact in all its traditions, ritual and mode of worship. Sunday was the day of the worship of the Sun—the Roman *Dies Soli*. To respect the religious susceptibilities of the Roman Sun-worshipper, Constantine could not do better than to keep the same day as the day of the Christian Sabbath. An average Roman Catholic cathedral, with its altar facing towards the east, the monks and nuns with the tonsure, the acolytes, the choir and the rest of the paraphernalia, carries us at once to the temples of the Pagan world. Why must the altar in the church, whether built on the east or the west side of Judæa, the place of Jesus, or north or south of it, face to the east? The Christian churches erected in the first few centuries were erected indifferently as to whether the altar was at the east or the west end. Paulinus Nolanus speaks of a Christian church the altar of which was in the west, and the church at Antioch was also thus built. But

when the simplicity of the religion of Jesus became marred, and gave way to the popular cult, the altar had to face the east. It tickled the curiosity of the people in those days, and St. Ambrose had to explain it in the following words: "When you entered into the baptistry, and viewed your enemy whom you were to renounce, you then turned about to the East for he that renounces the devil is turned unto the Christ." Cyril of Jerusalem says to the initiates: "You were first brought into the ante-room of the baptistry and placed towards the West, in a standing posture, then commanded to renounce Satan. . . . The West is the place of Darkness, and his strength is in Darkness. For this reason ye symbolically look towards the West when ye renounce the Prince of Darkness."

It was all very well if the Sun-worship creed was not at its prime very near the days when these words were uttered. It may be said in a way of apology that Jesus was called the Sun of Righteousness, and hence the whole metaphor. But it is not so, nor is it the language of metaphor. It is, or was, the language of fact, and of realities in the Sun creed. The east brings the sun to the horizon, and the west is the place of the Prince of Darkness where the sun himself disappears.

The Devil has been given the name of serpent

in Church phraseology. But the serpent has got no barbed tail, while the Church painting makes the barbed tail an essential appendix of the Devil. Even his overcoat, in which the Devil conceals himself, cannot cover his barbed tail, which exposes his disguise. Whence came the idea of the barbed tail, if the serpent originated in the story of the Fall of Adam? Again, we find the Scorpion as a substitute for the Serpent, which undoubtedly has got a barbed tail. Read this all in the light of the sky-scriptures, and everything becomes clear. The Scorpion which stings the Sun-god with its tail is in the Zodiac the symbol of his adversary.

The institution of monks and nuns can also be traced to the same origin. Jesus neither advocated nor recommended celibacy. The single life of Jesus—though his first miracle took place on an occasion of marriage, and his participation in it gave sanctity to the marital institution—might encourage monasticism, but how are we to explain the tonsure? Even Paul, with all his tendency to use most of the older cult as material for the Church he built, is silent on the question. Sun-worship alone can explain it. Mithraism had its monks and nuns, as Tertullian admits, with the tonsure in honour of the disc of the Sun. To be shorn of hair is, doubtless, a sign of asceti-

cism ; but it is the form of the tonsure—the round bare place on the head of the Romish priests and monks, formed by shaving the hair, that bears resemblance to the disc of the Sun. Does it not show that, as Apollo came to supplant Mithra, so the place of the former was given to Christ, while everything of their religion was kept intact with all its legends, festivals and forms of worship ?

The Holy Communion also represents the ancient Eucharistic Ceremony, which was observed from Persia to Peru, in every Sun-worship country. The idea of Sin and Expiation is also an ancient idea. The sacrificed animal represented the Dying Deity, as the Lord Krishna says in the Bhagwat Gita, “I am the oblation, I am the sacrifice, I am the ancestral offering.” “In the truly orthodox conception of sacrifice,” says Elie Reclus, “the consecrated offering, be it man, woman or virgin, lamb or heifer, cock or dove, represents the deity himself.”¹

The person whose sacrifice was represented, was believed to be actually present at the time of the sacrifice, and his flesh, eaten by the worshippers, made the latter at one with the former. The flesh of the god entering into the body of man created a sort of holy communion between the deity and the votary.

¹ *Primitive Folk*, chap. vi.

It is not I who make this assertion ; the Early Fathers have said the same. Do they not say that the Mithraic Eucharist was identified with the Lord's Supper ? Ponder over the words of the Lord Khrishna quoted above. The same idea had been working in the minds of the ancients everywhere—the atoning personality becoming God, and the belief that to eat anything taken out of the sacrifice, or from meals prepared in celebrating the ceremony, purifies the body of the eater and brings him into union with God. I admit that Jesus has been represented as saying something on this point, but it scarcely seems to convey the ideas and beliefs that underlie the Church conception of the Communion—the *At-one-ment* of the votary with the Lord by his participation in the supper. The idea is pagan, pure and simple, in its origin as well as in its conception.

That the writers of the Gospels were writing under the influence of the Sun-worship cult appears throughout their whole record ; the similes and the metaphors are taken from the Sun-worship language all through. “He was a burning and a shining light ; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light ;” “I am the Light of the world” ; I must work the works of Him that sent me *while it is day* ; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am

the Light of the world ” ; “ Yet a little while is the light with you ; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you. While ye have the light, believe in the light.”

It may be said that Jesus was the Sun of Righteousness, and hence the language and the metaphors ; but there are certain reported utterances of Jesus which do not admit of such explanations. “ And no man hath ascended up to heaven, save the Son of man, who is in heaven.” Jesus, as a Jew, did believe that at least two men, Enoch and Elijah, had ascended into heaven, and therefore he could not say that no man has ascended into heaven. Jesus at the time of this utterance was not in heaven ; he was on the earth. The utterance does not befit the real Jesus, while on the earth, but accords well enough with the Sun-God who comes down from heaven at his birth, and ascends into heaven again, and yet remains all the time in heaven.

The Good Shepherd in the Church is the beautiful shepherd. The Greek word for the “ good ” in the English translation does not mean good, but “ beautiful,” and it is certain that Apollo, the Beautiful, was also called shepherd long before the Christian God.

Be the memory of Muhammad glorified and remain ever green ! To keep his religion free from all pagan ideas and ritual, he would not

allow his followers to say any prayer at the time when the sun assumes a conspicuous phase in his diurnal course. We Muslims have been enjoined to say our prayers five times a day. But we have been clearly forbidden to say any prayer just exactly at the time when the sun rises, or at the time when it sets, or at the time when it passes the meridian, so that the Muslim Prayer may not become identified with Sun-worship. Islam is the only religion which did not need any incorporation of the existing ideas. It stood rather against them, if they were wrong, and tried to demolish them; yet the religion prevailed and purged the world of its polytheistic rituals and practices—those of Sun-worship among them—while the religion of Jesus, through hands unworthy of the name of the Master, became absolutely metamorphosed into the pagan cult. They retained the name of Jesus, no doubt, but so did the worshippers of Apollo when he became the favourite deity after Mithra. The Mithraic cult flourished centuries before the Apollo-worship, but the two faiths are one and the same, the difference being in name. Apollo had to represent Mithra in the whole cult, and so Jesus was taken as a substitute for Apollo in Rome, but the cult was in all other respects the same—the same birthday, the same Virgin-

birth, and Immaculate conception, the same baptism, the same Eucharist, the same Passion Story, the same descent into hell, the same resurrection and ascension into heaven, the same Easter-day merriments, the same sign of the Lamb, the same hot cross-buns, the same eggs, the same Sunday—the Roman Dies Solis—the Day of the Sun, the Lord's Day, and the same phraseology and philosophy, as I will show in the ensuing chapter, apart from several festivals of the Catholic Calendar, which have been traced to the sky-scriptures.

I have confined my remarks to the Sun-worship cult which was in vogue in countries surrounding the cradle of Christianity at its birth, but almost all ancient religions in the East have very similar legends and traditions, similar beliefs and tenets, to those that were introduced into Christianity by the Early Fathers.

In these pages, while seeking to trace the origin of many of the Christian traditions and doctrines, I have confined myself principally to the Sun-worship cult, as it was the popular creed. But no country or creed of the ancient world has been without such legends and teachings. The scholar may attempt to explain away the palpable similitude, as suggested by the Early Fathers, but “the Pagans had their Christ everywhere, including India.

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The miraculous birth, the immaculate conception,¹ the birthplace,² the star, the song of the heavenly host at the birth, the child God presented with gifts, the slaughter of the innocent, the temptations, the fast of forty days, the Crucifixion and the death to redeem mankind, the descent into Hell³ and ascension; the Second Coming, the anointed as Judge

¹ No country in the ancient world was without its virgin-born deities, including India and China. Here I give the name of some from amongst "the parcels of sons," as Justin Martyr says of Jupiter, from Virgin Mothers: Bacchus by Semele; Amphion by Antiope; Perseus by Danæ; Mercury—the Good Shepherd who carried the lamb on his shoulders as Jesus was subsequently represented—by Maia; Æolus by Acosta; Apollo by Latona; Æthlius by Protogenia.

² In his *Life of Christ*, p. 38, Dean Farrar says "That the actual place of Christ's birth was a cave is a very old tradition, and this cave used to be shown as the scene of the event so early as the time of Justin Martyr (150 A.D.)." The ceremonies in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem are celebrated to this day in a cave, but in the time of Tertullian and Jerome (375) the cave, though believed by the Fathers, as their writings show, to be the birthplace of Jesus, was used by the heathen to celebrate ceremonies in honour of Adonis. Like him, all preceding religions had gods and virgin-born deities born in a cave—Krishna (India), Bacchus, Apollo, Mithra (Persia), Hermes, Allys (Phrygia).

³ Zoroaster (the Persian), Osiris and Horus the Egyptian Saviour, Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules, Mercury, Baldur Quetzalcoatl, descended into Hell; they remained in Hell for the space of two or three days and three nights, and on the third day they rose again.

of the dead, the Alpha and Omega, the Trinity, in different accents and stress, are the same.

The learned author of *Bible Myths* lucidly draws some analogies between Jesus and Buddha. It should not be forgotten that not only does there exist remarkable similarity in the teachings of the two, but some of the parables and precepts that we find in the Gospels had been given, word by word, by Buddha, some five hundred years before Jesus. The records of Buddha are not entirely unapocryphal, or altogether consistent, but the main features are the same everywhere. Every hero or divinity in the ancient world lives the same life and possesses the same features. He must be born of a virgin ; Buddha, like Jesus, though known to be born in the house of his mother's husband, is still believed to be born of the Virgin Maya, which is the same name as Mary. He must be of royal descent, but at the time of his birth he must have humble surroundings. These and many other things already noted, present a striking similitude between the narrative of Jesus and that of other gods-in-man. They suggest rather the mind and psychology of the olden days, that demanded the incarnate deities clothed with certain essentials, than the actualities of the case.

The mythological portions of the histories

of Buddha and Jesus are, as already stated, nearer in resemblance than that of any two characters of antiquity. Mr. T. W. Doane gives the following comparison of the analogies :—¹

1. Buddha was born of the Virgin Maya, who conceived him without carnal intercourse.

2. The incarnation of Buddha is recorded to have been brought about by the descent of the divine power called the "*Holy Ghost*," upon the Virgin Maya.

3. When Buddha descended from the regions of the souls, and entered the body of the Virgin Maya, her womb assumed the appearance of clear transparent crystal, in which Buddha appeared, beautiful as a flower.

4. The birth of Buddha was announced in the heavens by an *asterim* which was seen rising on the horizon. It is called the "*Messianic Star*."

5. "The son of the Virgin Maya, on whom, according to the tradition, the '*Holy*

1. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, who conceived him without carnal intercourse.

2. The incarnation of Jesus is recorded to have been brought about by the descent of the divine power called the "*Holy Ghost*," upon the Virgin Mary.

3. When Jesus descended from his heavenly seat, and entered the body of the Virgin Mary, her womb assumed the appearance of clear transparent crystal, in which Jesus appeared beautiful as a flower.

4. The birth of Jesus was announced in the heavens by "*his star*," which was seen rising on the horizon. It might properly be called the "*Messianic Star*."

5. The Son of the Virgin Mary, on whom, according to the tradition, the "*Holy*

¹ *Bible Myths*, pp. 287-297.

Ghost ' had descended, was said to have been born on Christmas day."

6. Demonstrations of celestial delight were manifest at the birth of Buddha. The *Devas* in heaven and earth sang praises to the "Blessed One," and said: "To-day, *Bodhisatwa* is born on earth, to give joy and peace to men and *Devas*, to shed light in the dark places, and to give sight to the blind."

7. "Buddha was visited by wise men who recognized in this marvellous infant all the characters of the divinity, and he had scarcely seen the day before he was hailed God of Gods."

8. The infant Buddha was presented with "costly jewels and precious substances."

9. When Buddha was an infant, just born, he spoke to his mother, and said: "I am the greatest among men."

10. Buddha was a "dangerous child." His life was threatened by King Bimbisara, who was advised to destroy the child, as he was liable to overthrow him.

Ghost " had descended, was said to have been born on Christmas day.

6. Demonstrations of celestial delight were manifest at the birth of Jesus. The angels in heaven and earth sang praises to the "Blessed One," saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

7. Jesus was visited by wise men who recognized in this marvellous infant all the characters of the divinity, and he had scarcely seen the day before he was hailed God of Gods.

8. The infant Jesus was presented with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

9. When Jesus was an infant in his cradle, he spoke to his mother, and said: "I am Jesus, the Son of God."

10. Jesus was a "dangerous child." His life was threatened by King Herod, who attempted to destroy the child, as he was liable to overthrow him.

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11. When sent to school, the young Buddha surprised his masters. Without having ever studied, he completely worsted all his competitors, not only in writing, but in arithmetic, mathematics, metaphysics, astrology, geometry, etc.

12. "When *twelve* years old, the child Buddha is presented in the temple. He explains and asks learned questions; he excels all those who enter into competition with him."

13. Buddha entered a temple, on which occasion forthwith all the statues rose and threw themselves at his feet, in act of worship.

14. "The ancestry of Gotama Buddha is traced from his father, *Sodhōdana*, through various individuals and races, all of royal dignity, to *Maha Sammata*, the first monarch of the world. Several of the names and some of the events are met with in the Puranas of the Brahmans, but it is not possible to reconcile one order of statement with the other; and

11. When sent to school, Jesus surprised his master, Zaccheus, who, turning to Joseph, said: "Thou hast brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master."

12. "And when he was *twelve* years old, they brought him to (the temple at) Jerusalem. . . . While in the temple among the doctors and elders, and learned men of Israel, he proposed several questions of learning, and also gave them answers."

13. "And as Jesus was going in by the ensigns, who carried the standards, the tops of them bowed down and worshipped Jesus."

14. The ancestry of Jesus is traced from his father, Joseph, through various individuals, nearly all of whom were of royal dignity, to Adam, the first monarch of the world. Several of the names, and some of the events, are met with in the sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews, but it is not possible to reconcile one order of statement with the other; and it would appear

it would appear that the Buddhist historians have introduced races, and invented names, that they may invest their venerated Sage with all the honours of heraldry, in addition to the attributes of divinity.

15. When Buddha was about to go forth "to adopt a religious life," *Mara* appeared before him, to tempt him.

16. *Mara* said unto Buddha: "Go not forth to adopt a religious life, and in seven days thou shalt become an emperor of the world."

17. Buddha would not heed the words of the Evil One, and said to him: "Get thee away from me."

18. After *Mara* had left Buddha, "the skies rained flowers, and delicious odours pervaded the air."

19. Buddha fasted for a long period.

20. Buddha, the Saviour, was baptized, and at this recorded water-baptism the Spirit of God was present; that is, not only the highest God, but also the "Holy Ghost," through whom the incarnation of Gautama

that the Christian historians have invented and introduced names, that they may invest their venerated Sage with all the honours of heraldry, in addition to the attributes of divinity.

15. When Jesus was about "beginning to preach," the *devil* appeared before him, to tempt him.

16. The *devil* said to Jesus: "If thou wilt fall down and worship me, I will give thee all the kingdoms of the world."

17. Jesus would not heed the words of the Evil One, and said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan."

18. After the *devil* had left Jesus, "angels came and ministered unto him."

19. Jesus fasted forty days and nights.

20. Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, at which time the spirit of God was present; that is, not only the highest God, but also the "Holy Ghost," through whom the incarnation of Jesus is recorded

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Buddha is recorded to have been brought about by the descent of that Divine power upon the Virgin Maya.

21. "On one occasion toward the end of his life on earth, Gautama Buddha is reported to have been *transfigured*. When *on a mountain* in Ceylon, suddenly a flame of light descended upon him and encircled the crown of his head with a circle of light. The mount is called *Pandava*, or yellow-white colour. It is said that 'the glory of his person shone forth with double power,' that his body was 'glorious as a bright golden image,' that he 'shone as the brightness of the sun and moon,' that bystanders expressed their opinion, that he could not be 'an everyday person,' or 'a mortal man,' and that his body was divided into *three* parts, from each of which a ray of light issued forth."

22. "Buddha performed great miracles for the good of mankind, and the legends concerning him are full of the greatest prodigies and wonders."

to have been brought about, by the descent of that Divine power upon the Virgin Mary.

21. On one occasion during his career on earth, Jesus is reported to have been transfigured: "Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a *high mountain* apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment as white as the light."

22. Jesus performed great miracles for the good of mankind, and the legends concerning him are full of the greatest prodigies and wonders.

23. By prayers in the name of Buddha, his followers expect to receive the rewards of paradise.

24. When Buddha died and was buried, "the coverings of the body unrolled themselves, and the lid of his coffin was opened by supernatural powers."

25. Buddha ascended bodily to the celestial regions, when his mission on earth was fulfilled.

26. Buddha is to come upon the earth again in the latter days, his mission being to restore the world to order and happiness.

27. Buddha is to be judge of the dead.

28. Buddha is Alpha and Omega, without beginning or end, "the Supreme Being, the Eternal One."

29. Buddha is represented as saying: "Let all the sins that were committed in this world fall on me, that the world may be delivered."

30. Buddha said: "Hide your good deeds, and confess before the world the sins you have committed."

31. "Buddha was described as a superhuman

23. By prayers in the name of Jesus, his followers expect to receive the rewards of paradise.

24. When Jesus died and was buried, the coverings of his body were unrolled from off him, and his tomb was opened by supernatural powers.

25. Jesus ascended bodily to the celestial regions, when his mission on earth was fulfilled.

26. Jesus is to come upon the earth again in the latter days, his mission being to restore the world to order and happiness.

27. Jesus is to be the judge of the dead.

28. Jesus is Alpha and Omega, without beginning or end, the Supreme Being, the Eternal One.

29. Jesus is represented as the Saviour of mankind, and all sins that are committed in this world may fall on him, that the world may be delivered.

30. Jesus taught men to hide their good deeds, and to confess before the world the sins they had committed.

31. Jesus was described as a superhuman organ

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organ of light, to whom a superhuman organ of darkness, Mara or Naga, the Evil Serpent, was opposed."

32. Buddha came, not to destroy, but to fulfill, the law. He delighted in "representing himself as a *mere link* in a long chain of enlightened teachers."

33. "One day Ananda, the disciple of Buddha, after a long walk in the country, meets with Mâtangî, a woman of the low caste of the Kândâlas, near a well, and asks her for some water. She tells him what she is, and that she must not come near him. But he replies: 'My sister, I ask not for thy caste or thy family, I ask only for a draught of water.' She afterwards became a disciple of Buddha."

34. "According to Buddha, the motive of all our actions should be *pity* or *love* for our neighbour."

35. During the early part of his career as a teacher, "Buddha went to the city of Benares, and there delivered a discourse, by which Kondanya, and after-

of light—"the *Sun* of Righteousness" — opposed by "the old Serpent," the Satan, hinderer, or adversary.

32. Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

33. One day Jesus, after a long walk, cometh to the city of Samaria, and being wearied with his journey, sat on a well. While there, a woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus said unto her: "Give me to drink." "Then said the woman unto him: How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

34. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."

35. During the early part of his career as a teacher, Jesus went to the city of Capernaum, and there delivered a discourse. It was at this time that *four* fisher-

wards *four* others, were induced to become his disciples. From that period, whenever he preached, multitudes of men and women embraced his doctrines."

36. Those who became disciples of Buddha were told that they must "renounce the world," give up all their riches, and avow poverty.

37. It is recorded in the "Sacred Canon" of the Buddhists that the multitudes "*required a sign*" from Buddha "that they might believe."

38. When Buddha's time on earth was about coming to a close, he, "foreseeing the things that would happen in future times," said to his disciple Ananda: "Ananda, when I am gone, you must not think there is no Buddha; the *discourses* I have delivered, and the *precepts* I have enjoined, *must be my successors*, or representatives and be to you as Buddha."

39. In the Buddhist *Somadeva*, is to be found the following: "To give away our riches is considered the most difficult virtue in the world; he

men were induced to become his disciples. From that period, whenever he preached, multitudes of men and women embraced his doctrines.

36. Those who became disciples of Jesus were told that they must renounce the world, give up all their riches, and avow poverty.

37. It is recorded in the "Sacred Canon" of the Christians that the multitudes required a sign from Jesus that they might believe.

38. When Jesus' time on earth was about coming to a close, he told of the things that would happen in future times, and said unto his disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

39. "And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? . . . Jesus said unto him,

who gives away his riches is like a man who gives away his life: for our very life seems to cling to our riches. But Buddha, when his mind was moved by pity, *gave his life* like grass, for the sake of others; why should we think of miserable riches! By this exalted virtue, Buddha, when he was freed from all desires, and had obtained divine knowledge, attained unto Buddhahood. Therefore, let a wise man, after he has turned away his desires from all pleasures, do good to all beings, even unto sacrificing his own life, that thus he may attain to true knowledge."

40. Buddha's aim was to establish a "Religious Kingdom," a "*Kingdom of Heaven*."

41. Buddha said: "I now desire to turn the wheel of the excellent law. For this purpose am I going to the city of Benares, to give light to those enshrouded in darkness, and to open the gate of Immortality to man."

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

40. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the *Kingdom of Heaven* is at hand."

41. Jesus, after his temptation by the devil, began to establish the dominion of his religion, and he went for this purpose to the city of Capernaum. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

42. Buddha said :

"Though the heavens were to fall to earth, and the great world be swallowed up and pass away : Though Mount Sumera were to crack to pieces, and the great ocean be dried up, yet, Ananda, be assured, the words of Buddha are true."

43. Buddha said :

"There is no passion more violent than voluptuousness. Happily there is but one such passion. If there were two, not a man in the whole universe could follow the truth." "Beware of fixing your eyes upon women. If you find yourself in their company, let it be as though you were not present. If you speak with them, guard well your hearts."

44. Buddha said : "A wise man should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of live coals. One who is not able to live in a state of celibacy should not commit adultery."

45. "Buddhism is convinced that if a man reaps

42. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ."

"*Verily* I say unto you . . . heaven and earth shall pass away, *but my words shall not pass away.*"

43. Jesus said : "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery : But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

44. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," "but if they cannot contain let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn." "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband."

45. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which

sorrow, disappointment, pain, he himself, and no other, must at some time have sown folly, error, sin ; and if not in this life then in some former birth."

46. Buddha knew the thoughts of others : " By directing his mind to the thoughts of others, he can know the thoughts of all beings."

47. In the *Somadeva* a story is related of a Buddhist ascetic whose eye offended him ; he therefore plucked it out, and cast it away.

48. When Buddha was about to become an ascetic, and when riding on the horse " Kantako," his path was strewn with flowers, thrown there by Devas.

was *blind from his birth*. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ? "

46. Jesus knew the thoughts of others. By directing his mind to the thoughts of others, he knew the thoughts of all beings.

47. It is related in the New Testament that Jesus said : " If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

48. When Jesus was entering Jerusalem, riding on an ass, his path was strewn with palm branches, thrown there by the multitude.

CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHY AND PHRASEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH

THE gentle Teacher of Nazareth cared little for the philosophic conundrums and sophistical riddles of later growth in the Church called after his name. Simple was his teaching, free from mystery and myth. In other words, Love of God and love of man was the key-note of his life. His God was not the God of Vengeance and Retribution—the Angered Deity, Whose wrath could not be appeased save by sacrifice on the altar. The pre-Christian world was not without such deities, and the whole Pagan world was full of them—the theory of Sin and Sacrifice, with many a Passion story, was the basic principle of all the heathen cults. The Judaic God was of the same type.

Jesus came with the Gospel, and taught a beautiful conception of God and man. Man was not the “child of wrath,” as he was made subsequently by the Church, fashioned after olden creeds in the name of Jesus; but the

Son of God, Who was “*Our Father in Heaven, Who always forgives our debts as we forgive our debtors.*” If the payment by a third party of the liabilities of a debtor does not mean the remission of debts by the creditors in any sense of the word, then the sacred quotation I have italicized above goes to the very root of the so-called theory of Atonement. To say that the third party is none other than the creditor himself, is an explanation too puerile in its conception, and perhaps too theatrical, to demand thoughtful consideration. Besides, it is unbecoming of the Lord, Whose blessings, unnumbered and unlimited as they are, come to us without our merits or deserts. These demand no compensation. They are for all equally, and carry no distinction, because “My God is your God,” “My Father is your Father,” as Jesus says.

The religion of Jesus was the religion of love. With him the love of man for God was no mere lip-service, but a reality, which could be expressed only in man’s implicit submission to His Will. “Thy Will and not mine” was not an empty utterance, but one signifying the hardest ordeal, and so it should be translated by everyone through action, by obeying His Commandments, and by carrying, everyone his own cross.

In other words, commandment and obedi-

ence were the basis of his simple faith. Jesus did not "come to destroy the Law" or the prophets: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil . . . whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach one so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." His Law was the Law of Moses. He tried to inspire respect for it, and for further knowledge of it he would always refer his disciples to the Scribes. It was the only proper course, as he himself did not frame any code. If observance of the Law was his sole religion, "a few prayers with a few curses, and a few sermons with a few miracles," as a cynic sums up the evangelical records, decidedly cannot make it otherwise.

His selfless soul dreamed of a commonwealth with a sort of joint right in property. The ideal could, with necessary modifications, have come to some reality, had this personification of self-effacement, as Jesus was, been allowed more time, more leisure for thought, and a broader survey of the human mind. The last, however, was left for the coming Prophet, and Muhammad left the world principles wide enough to give practical shape to the best form of socialism.

This briefly sums up the whole of his teaching, which was none other than Islam. He came to reclaim the lost sheep of the Israelites, and would not cast pearls before swine; he would not allow dogs to eat the children's bread. Non-national religion was something unknown to him. The Israelites were his only concern, and remained so throughout his life. We, no doubt, read something to the contrary in St. Mark xvi, where he is reported to have said to the eleven as they sat at meat: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This, we are told, occurred after the resurrection, as before this he only thought of his own tribe. He also gave them the gift of miracles: "In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

The Christian Foreign Missions look to the above quotations as the authority and justification for their work abroad; but the workers in the Missions do not seem to possess the distinctive signs that ought to be possessed by those who are sent to preach the Gospel to the world. Perhaps it is because "these signs shall follow them that believe." Decidedly not an enviable position, with this reflection

on the workers in the Foreign Mission. How can they carry faith to others, if they themselves are lacking? They are, however, saved from this precarious situation. The concluding eleven verses of St. Mark xvi, that speak of the resurrection as well as of the foreign Mission and the signs, with the sweeping condemnation of the non-Christian world, so unbecoming of a gentle soul like Jesus, have been proved to be an addition and forgery, and do not exist in the Vulgate, nor in the ancient Greek MSS.

The first translators of the Bible in English, under James I, found it so, and pointed it out in a marginal note on these eleven verses. The fact is not unknown to the British and Foreign Bible Society; yet they do not care to remove the verses from their Bibles; nor do they deem it necessary to put a note in the margin, as was done by the first English translators. Why they should keep the world in the dark on the point is a question which they ought to consider in the interest of truth and honesty. Jesus, however, lived at a time when his nation was eaten up by self-indulgence and hypocrisy. They would clean the outside of the pots, and polish the outside of the utensils; but the inner places of their heart were like the whitewashed tomb, full of worms within. They worshipped the letter and ignored the

spirit. They strained at the gnat, and swallowed the camel.

To such a class of people, Jesus came for reform. This explains what we frequently find in the Sermon on the Mount, where, for example, he says : “ Ye have heard ‘ such and such,’ but I say unto you ‘ such and such.’ ” This is not the changing of the Law, but it gave the true meaning of it, in its spirit, to those who went after the letter and strained it to hair-splitting. He could, no doubt, teach his disciples many things unknown to them. He said : “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” His disciples, unfortunately, did not possess intelligence enough to understand the Master. He had to talk to them in such parables as could suit their low intellects. But “ many things ” he could not say. He had, therefore, to refer them to the Spirit of Truth, who “ will guide you into all truth.” The Spirit, we are told, did come, and descended on the Day of Pentecost, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven, and there “ appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The Spirit of Truth came, as it is believed, but did He guide them into all truth ? Or did the Church, in whom the

prophecy in question has ever since been alleged to be fulfilled, teach or discover all or any truth? This is the question which I intend to discuss in these pages, and which I shall leave my readers to decide for themselves.

The mystery part of the Church teachings, dealt with in the last chapter, is an addition to what was left to us by Jesus; but it was only an incorporation from sources alien to his very Faith. It could not be the promised truth. It has, on the other hand, marred the beauty and simplicity of his teaching. It has paganized the Faith to its very core, and could not have come from the Holy Ghost. If its source was indeed the Devil, in the Mithraic cult, as pointed out by the Early Fathers in the Church, how could the same teaching have come from the Holy Ghost?

After the mystery, comes the philosophy part of the Church teaching. Mystery and philosophy are the only two ingredients of the Pauline faith. One speaks of certain events in the life of the chief Personality in the religion, and of belief in them as the only requisite to secure salvation. The other—the philosophic part—describes and explains the *locus standi* of that personality, and the function he performs in the uplifting of humanity.

This part of Christian theology did not occur to the first three evangelists. The open-

ing verses of the Gospel of St. John introduce it for the first time ; but the writer did not dare to go beyond the bare statement of it. No doubt we read a verse or two in that Gospel about the Holy Trinity, but it was found to be an after-insertion, and a forged addition to the original text, as found by the translators of the Bible under James I.

St. Paul produced this part of the lore, and subsequent writers, though they have produced voluminous literature, have hardly added anything to his philosophy.

St. Paul,¹ of all pillars of the Church, may claim to be filled with the promised Spirit of Truth ; as he must have uttered All-Truth if the Church founded by him was after the mind of the Master. Paul says new things. His words have been taken as new manna of life, and have leavened the whole of the literature to come. But St. Paul, and also the writer of the first few verses in St. John, leavened everything, word by word—thought as well as expression, conception as well as phraseology—from sources, human, and in no case Divine. It is not the Holy Ghost,

¹ St. Paul—Saul of Tarsus—could not be the author of what we find in the New Testament under his name, as many learned critics think, but I do not like to enter into the discussion in these pages, and accept him as the author of the Pauline literature.

but Plato, Philo and others of the Alexandrian school of philosophy, that inspired the first builders of the Church in their writings. The term *word*, used in St. John, which stands for the Greek word *Logos*, is an inadequate rendering. In all his writings Philo speaks of *Logos*—a philosophic conception of later growth and a development of the “Idea of Plato,” in his theory of Emanation. It does not mean *Word*; it conveys “Thought as well as expression.” Plato, when dealing with the subject, spoke of something—as the first thing in creation that may be styled “Reason or Wisdom”—the first product of Herbert Spencer’s “First Intelligent Cause.”

From ethereal specks up to man, their final combination, every manifestation of nature evinces Divine Intelligence and discloses design—the *Logos* of Philo, taken in its widest sense. Modern researches in science do not go against it. Go where you will, even beyond the nebular regions, everything in the universe is within the domain of the Law—the first manifestation of the Divine Intention of Creation, as the Holy Qur-án says: “His Command, when He *intends* anything, is only to say to it, BE, SO IT IS.” Call it, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad says, His First Thought, His Knowledge, His Love to express Himself; or the *Logos* of Philo, and the *Idea* of Plato;

words in themselves are smoke and fire. They are good as long as they express certain ideas. The concept in all these various expressions is the same—the intention or design of creating the universe. Undoubtedly it reposed in the bosom of the Lord: “The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by that—Design—and without that was not anything made that was made.” It became materialized when the Creation began. It is truth; no true religion, philosophy or science can contradict it. If the Creator—to use metaphor—is All-Father, this His Intention is the First-Born or First-Begotten Son of God, as Philo styles his *Logos*.¹ Further, he says of the *Word* by which the world was made, that it is the image of the Supreme Deity.² God sealed the entire Cosmos with an Image and Idea, his Own Word.³ “As those who are unable to gaze upon the sun look upon his reflected radiance as a sun, so likewise the Image of God; his angel Word, is himself considered to be God.”⁴ “That High Priest, the Holy Word, the First-Born of God;⁵ His Word, which is His Interpreter.”⁶ “In the likeness of man.”⁷ “God, by the same Word, by Whom He made all things.”⁸

¹ *De Agric.*, i. 308.² *De Monarchia*, II. ii. 225.³ *De Somn.*, II. 6. i. 665.⁴ *Ibid.* i. 40, 41.⁵ *Ibid.* i. 653.⁶ *De Legis Allegor.*, iii. 73.⁷ *De Confu., Ling.*, i. 427.⁸ *De Sacrificis*, i. 165, 5.

If we take the term *The Word*, as used in these lines, to mean the Wisdom or Intention of God, in the way explained above and divest it of its metaphorical coverings, it appears to be an undeniable truth. In the light of the existence of that which I quote here from Philo, do not the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John appear to be only a too literal re-echo of the writings of the Jewish philosopher, who lived and wrote all this one hundred years before the writers, whosoever they may be, of that Gospel ?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was Life ; and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in the Darkness ; and the Darkness comprehended it not.¹

There is not a single idea or expression in these verses that cannot be traced directly to Philo. Jesus may or may not be the Incarnation of the *Word*—the followers of other faiths, as well, look to the founder of their respective religions in the same way. The Muslim *Sufis* believe that the Light of Muhammad was the first expression of God's creation, out of which the whole world was made ; and if man was the final and best product of

¹ John i. 1-5.

God's hand, we find in Muhammad the complete expression of all that is noble and good in humanity, while Jesus had too short a life to exhibit a comprehensive example of human morals; and therefore the *Sufi* claim seems to be stronger, and the inspiration under which the writer of the said Gospel wrote the above-quoted verses did not come from the Holy Ghost, but from the Alexandrian School of Philosophy.

St. Paul also introduced new philosophy and logic into Christian theology, and expressed them in new phraseology—which till to-day graces all Church orations. Religious sermons are besprinkled with phrases like the following, which Paul and a few others were the first to use in Christian literature: "God's First-Begotten Son, the Intermediary Between God and man"; "The Intercessor with the Father"; "The Good Shepherd"; "The Image of God"; "The Foundation of the Universe"; "The Bread of Life"; "The Sinless"; "The Price of Sin"; "The Gift of God to man to ransom his sins"; "The High Priest"; "The Second God"; "The Interpreter of God to man"; "The Giver of the Water of Everlasting Life"; "Seated next to God"; "The Physician and Healer of Souls"; "No one worthy of God but he who follows the Son"; "The human heart the only Shrine of God"; "God of

Triune nature and the Son to take the second place in the Holy Trinity ”; “ Actions without faith of no value.”

Everything sounds new, charming and graceful too; something certainly not known to the other disciples—nay, not even taught by the Master; and it was left, therefore, for the Holy Ghost to “ fill ” someone and for that someone to reveal it to the world; and why, therefore, should not St. Paul be accepted as having been filled with the Spirit, when sprinkling such gems of philosophy and theology on those who believe, with a force that could exert for the coming two thousand years more influence on his following than the Lord of Christianity himself? St. Paul undoubtedly could have been taken as the founder of this new theology, speaking as if filled with the Holy Ghost, by the rest of the world too, as he is accepted by the majority of the Christian Church, had his inspiration not been traced to the following passages that exist in the writings of Philo: “ His Word which is his Interpreter; ”¹ “ To his Word he gave this especial gift that He should stand as an Intercessor between the Creator and the created ”; ² “ We maintain that by the High Priest is meant the Word Who is free from all transgression, being of

¹ *De Legis Allegor.*, iii. 73.

² *Quis Rerum Divin. Heres.*, i. 501.

heavenly parentage";¹ "The Word of God is the Physician and Healer of all our evils";² "The heavenly food . . . is the Divine Word";³ "The Image of God is His Eternal Word";⁴ "The High Priest is the Divine Word, hence His head is anointed";⁵ "The Shepherd of His holy flocks";⁶ "What man is there of true judgment who, when he sees the deeds of most men, is not ready to call out aloud to God, the Great Saviour, that He would be *pleased to take off this load of sin, and, by appointing a price and ransom for the soul, restore it to its original liberty*?"⁷ "He, therefore, exhorts every person who is able to exert himself in the race which he is to run, to bend his course without remission to the Divine Word above, who is the Fountain Head of all wisdom, that, by drinking of this sacred spring, he, instead of death, may receive the reward of everlasting life";⁸ "Being the Image of God and the First-Born of all intelligent creatures, *He is seated immediately next to the One God without any interval*

¹ *De Profugis*, i. 562, 13.

² *De Leg. Alleg.*, i. 122, 17.

³ *De Deler. Potiori Infid.*, i. 213, 45.

⁴ *De Confu.*, *Ling.*, i. 427.

⁵ (*Christos*) *De Somniis*, i. 653.

⁶ *De Agric.*, i. 308, 27.

⁷ *De Confus.*, *Ling.*, i. 418.

⁸ *De Profugis*, i. 560, 31.

of separation” ;¹ “ Even if no one is as yet worthy to be called a Son of God, one should nevertheless labour earnestly to be adorned like unto His First-Born Son, The Word ” ;² “ God, by the same Word by whom He made all things, will raise the good man from the things of this world and exalt him near unto Himself ” ;³ “ God, escorted on each side by personages from on high, whose attributes were goodness and power, the Divinity in the middle being in union with the other two, impressed a threefold appearance upon the soul of Abraham who beheld them.”⁴

Are we not accustomed to hear these, word by word, from the pulpit in the Christian churches ? Do not these quotations from Philo sound like the writings of Paul ? Thus we trace the source of Pauline inspiration. It is the human brain, and not the Spirit of the Lord. St. Paul is not filled with the Spirit, in the fulfilment of the prophecy (St. John), to say “ all truth ” in all that he has ingrafted on the virgin soil of Christianity and thus affected the whole Church teaching after him. In his philosophy he is the disciple of Philo and Plato, and not of Jesus ; and if these two great men had nothing to do with the Master, one belonging to Judaism and the other to a

¹ *De Profugis*, i. 561, 16.

² *De Confu., Ling.*, i. 427.

³ *De Sacrificis*, i. 165, 5.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 173, 12.

pagan cult, St. Paul deserves no claim on the allegiance of those who wish and ought to be in the footsteps of Jesus.

Jesus was a man of action ; his days were with man and his nights with God. He was a great believer in actions—the translation of the Law of God into deeds. If the young man came to him to learn the way to the Kingdom of God, he would exhort him to the commandments and their strict observance. He had the gift of miracles. He could heal the invalid, and is reported to have reanimated the dead. But he did not claim the gift as his exclusive possession. His disciples wanted to know the secret, and asked him how he worked the miracles. They could do the same, was the reply of the noble Master, if they had faith accompanied with actions—prayer, fasting and obeying the commandments.

What an irony of fate that he who declared “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled,” should be followed—nay, superseded—by him who declared the Law a curse and not a blessing from God, and that only to win favour with those with whom the Master would have nothing to do—the Greeks and the Romans. But the reason is not far to seek. St. Paul could not claim any respect

from his own people. At first an implacable enemy of Jesus and persecutor of his followers, then a renegade from Judaism and therefore hated by the Jews—so much so that his very presence in the synagogue, where he came to explain his schism to Judaism at the request of the other apostles, excited such contempt and hatred of the people as to drive him, an exile, from his home. He could not, moreover, work with the other apostles, who would take him to task for ignoring the Law. He, therefore, had sufficient reason to make the Gentile lands the field of his future work. He must work somewhere, and that was his last resort. The Gentiles were not the people of the Law. Actions in observance of the Law could not carry any weight with them; Law was a burden and a gate to sin if not observed, and hence a curse.

Thus begins the philosophy of his epistles to the Gentiles; they were a sinful tribe, like others. They were visited by calamities, as others were. They ascribed it to their misdeeds. But sacrifice only, and not repentance and reclamation, could please the angered Deity, in their belief. Sin and sacrifice was the basic principle of their creed.

Did Paul go to them with a new faith, a new way of salvation, taught by the new Teacher from Judæa, and a new means of appeasing

the wrath of the Deity ? Or did he go to them to repeat their own story, and that in their own language, in their own philosophy, and, worst of all, in the terms of their own cult ? They had heard of gods, as Gibbon observes, who used to descend from heaven in olden days, in the garb of man, to participate in human actions. They knew that gods incarnate suffered hardships for the benefit of the human race, and gave their very life to ward off impending calamities that came to punish men for their misdeeds. The angered deity thus became propitiated, the penalty of the sin remitted ; the incarnate god descended into Hades to reclaim the sinners. His task thus fulfilled, he ascended into heaven. The Greeks and Romans were not unaware of such gods. Their bards had written of them ; but these were the stories of the olden days ; they would naturally be anxious to see the old events repeated and to have a repetition of such visits. They would hail their coming, if informed of such an occurrence. St. Paul and his successors went to them with the message, and gave the longed-for good tidings. They informed the Pagan world that one of those whom they had been hearing of, and would naturally be glad to receive if they came again, had, at last, appeared in Judæa, and had undergone all that they had read and believed of the

deified class. The story was given to them the same ; the apostle of the new faith did not make any new demand in the way of belief ; the same traditions and the same rites sufficed. No action, but bare belief in the story, was sufficient for salvation. It would have been a matter of surprise if the new faith had not been accepted.

Brethren in God, in all His Messengers from God and in Christ, or in the Qur-ánic term, "People of the Book," come to an equitable term between you and us. Think of all that I have written in these pages as coming not from a controversialist, but from the pen of him who is at one with you in Jesus. You know as well as I do that the writings of the Gospels are not free from human interpolation ; it is now an admitted and established fact, and yet I go so far as to accept every word from Jesus as a binding authority ; even when they occur in the records of doubtful genuineness. We should not forget that the evangelical record, even if taken as it stands, is not the narration of actualities, but the record of impressions of those around Jesus. They were admittedly men of no culture and of low intellect. Jesus had to complain of it so often. Whatever occurred they read in the light of their own understanding. Therefore, try to find out something real, and

do not be led away by the impressions of others. For illustration, I may cite an instance. A girl is attacked with high fever and she loses all her senses, and comes under a death-like swoon ; the ignorant people around her would take her as dead ; they weep and cry. The Master happens to come at a time when the swoon is nearing its end ; he touches the girl, and lo ! she comes to her senses, reanimated no doubt. Will it not appear to the ignorant mob the miracle of bringing the dead to life ? I do not question the honesty of some of these witnesses ; they said what they thought and believed ; they expressed their impressions, they formulated their feelings. Take these stories as such, and make use of personal judgment, the gift of God given only to man.

Besides, there is not a single miracle recorded of Jesus the like of which was not worked by others who went before him in his tribe. Read of Elijah, Elisha, Moses and others, and you will find the truth of my remarks. If the birth of Jesus surprises you, there are greater surprises for you in Malek Salem Sâdiq.

Do not forget as well that the record in our hand was prepared on the hearsay account of the events which occurred some generations before they were written. See what Luke says in the beginning of his Gospel. His is

admittedly a hearsay story, but he says the same of the other synoptic narratives. Make reasonable allowance for all addition and subtraction that must accrue to the original story when passed through various hands of religious enthusiasts. Notwithstanding all this, I still say, let us follow the Master and take his words alone as our guide; brush aside all that Paul and others say. In a way, Paul has been rejected to-day by the modern Church. Read between the lines of the conclusions arrived at in the Cambridge Conference of the Modernists in 1918. The whole situation, in a way, is changed. The Church, in the finding of the Modernists, is of Paul, and did not come from Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth, and not the Jew from Tarsus, is the Lord of Christianity. The authority of the latter to act as an apostle comes from his own story of his vision. I find no reconciliation between Jesus as portrayed in the first three Gospels and the Jesus of Pauline writings. Let us look to the Master as the sole guide, and all these differences in the Christian and Muslim world will come to an easy solution. Besides, I am afraid there is no other course left now to a true Christian after what I have said in these pages. I have tried to avoid saying much of what I felt I had to say on the subject. I have been recording bare facts as they

existed in pre-Christian worship. The Church regards them as belonging to paganism. It is so, and if everything derived from the heathen cults and all that came from Philo, Plato and other pre-Christian writers, must be brushed aside from the teachings of the Church named after Jesus, nothing then remains of his faith to guide his followers, except his own few words recorded in the synoptic writings. Few as they are, they are still light and guidance to put us on the right track to reach our goal. Islam is not the religion of Muhammad only, but the religion of all the prophets of the world from God—Commands from God and obedience from man—and Muhammad was the last of the blessed race. Jesus preached Islam in his Sermon on the Mount. Man came to this world in the Image of God on the moral and spiritual plane, with the capacity to equip himself with Divine Attributes. His goal is the position in which he can reproduce Divine Morals. He enters the world potentially perfect, and capable of working out something in himself which will raise him to the precincts of Divinity. But look at the whole of Nature around you; is not the same partially true of everything else? Everything seems to be potentially perfect in its own sphere, though it is, of course, a long way from perfection. A seed of a tree possesses a stem, trunk, branches,

leaves, foliage, flowers, fruits, fragrance and so forth. But there is a prescribed course before it. The seed must pursue it in order to bring its latent contents to development. Such a course is the Law of God, or call it the Law of Nature—it is the same thing. Law is not legalism, as some foolishly think. Everything has some course before it by which it may achieve success—the most efficacious course for attaining its object. That course is its Law.

The Divine Laws, or Commandments, are the ways of the Creator which He has chosen, to bring His Creation to perfection. Everything evolves and pursues a certain course to this end. Man, the best work of God, the best product of Nature, is capable of doing everything and anything that the rest of Nature does. He is the universe in miniature. Could he remain without any knowledge of the Law in the true sense of the word? Could he work out, without any guidance from his Creator, all that is in him? If every other thing in Nature has been put in the right course to work out its destiny by the guiding hand of God—call it the Logos, the Word of God if you prefer it—could man be left without the Word of God? By what you call Commandments, Islam means submission to those Laws. They were revealed from time to time, through

His Holy Messengers, and raised humanity from the verge of animality to the place we have reached. But the days of the Prophets were not as our days. Human memory furnished the only good means of preserving the Word of God in its integrity and entirety. Hence came human interpolation, corruption and accretion and the consequent mutilation of the message from God. The Law from God was not in its original condition when Jesus appeared. He was raised to restore the Law again to its true form, but his ministry became curtailed by circumstances over which he had no control. It was too short to renew the whole truth. He, therefore, referred his disciples to the coming Master, the Comforter, the Paraclete—all that is literally signified in Ahmad, the second name of Muhammad. He comes to you and to the world, not with any new religion, but with the ancient and first religion from God to man, i.e. Islam—the Religion of Divine Laws and obedience to them—the code of permission and prohibition—and the final and complete Divine Commentary on the Word first given to man. “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge, thou shalt not eat of it.” The same was given in the religion revealed to Abraham and his descendants, and the religion of Moses, of Jesus and of the

other prophets of the world. See for yourselves what the Holy Qur-án says on these points :—

Say : We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord ; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.¹

The Holy Qur-án is not a new Book of its kind, but it brings any amount of new truths so necessary to raise humanity, and it also recapitulates, as it says itself, all the olden truths revealed before, purging them, at the same time, of all the human adulteration that crept into them :—

An apostle from Allah, reciting pure pages, wherein are all the right books.²

Can anyone question the soundness of the logic ? If God was pleased to reveal His ways to mankind at the very beginning—“ Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of knowledge, thou shalt not eat of it ”—and then continued sending messages, from time to time, to add to, or restore, the former revelation to its original purity, if corruption had crept into it, could He remain silent when at the advent of Muham-

¹ The Holy Qur-án, ii. 136.

² Ibid. xcvi. 2, 3.

mad, the sacred Scriptures of the whole world had become corrupt? If such was the case at the time, the need of a Book to restore the religion—the way of God to work out what is good and noble in man—to its true form, was a logical necessity; if once you accept the need of Divine Revelation, or, if you ever believed in the revelation of any Book, religion, code or Law as coming from God, you are bound to accept the Holy Qur-án as the Last Word of God, with Muhammad as the last of the blessed race. Which of the nations in the world is without a Book or religion from God? All of them hold their beliefs as handed over to them from Above. They also admit that the Books in their hands are not the same as first given to their prophet. Man has corrupted them, as he abuses many a gift of God; but should God remain silent? Things created by God sometimes disappear, sometimes become intermixed with other things, and thus lose their real intrinsic value. But as they are a necessity for mankind, and ought to exist in their original form, a fresh supply comes. Thus the Qur-án argues, when speaking of the necessity of its revelation after the other Sacred Books from God: “We do make some sign disappear or render it useless, but then we bring something better than or equal to it” (The Qur-án).

Jesus came when the world had gone woefully astray, otherwise his mission would be an absurdity. The world was not without a religion before. It had come already from God, but it had gone wrong; Jesus came for its rectification. That he came with a new dispensation when God had failed to work out human redemption by His former scheme in the old dispensation, is too stale a theology—and childlike too—to demand any notice—a slur on the Omniscience and Wisdom of God. Jesus was raised up by God for reforms, but humanity again took the wrong course. Paganism was too strong an attraction for her fancy. It got the better of her. Is it likely that God would wait fully seventeen centuries for our friends the Modernists to find out the truth for themselves, and to build the Church anew; for our brethren the Spiritualists, the Theosophists, the “New Thinkers,” the Christian Scientists, to find out their own religion after that long period? Could not God do the same as man is doing now, if he used to do so before? The situation is anomalous and not tenable. The Holy Qur-án did come in time to do what was needful—just at the time when the truth, throughout the whole world, had disappeared. Have not the Modernist findings of to-day been already taught in the Holy Qur-án? Has not

the best of the newly arisen persuasions of the day been beautifully taught in the Last Book ?¹ It was necessary for human uplifting, and so it was given through Muhammad.

Till Jesus—and so every devout man of every religion says about his own Prophet—man was God's special interest; He used to send His own Messengers from time to time, but after Jesus—as he brought the same whole truth (and the same may be said about the holy Teachers of other sister-faiths)—the door of Revelation became closed.

The Muslim says the same thing as regards Muhammad and the Holy Qur-án. But there is some justification for it in the Muslim case. The Holy Qur-án is, as admitted by friends and foes, the same as was handed on by Muhammad, as he received it from God, to his immediate followers. God vouchsafed the preservation of its integrity and its immunity from corruption.

Surely We have revealed the Reminder (Qur-án), and we will most surely be its guardian.²

Hence came the final revelation to show the way to God. The Revelation to Moses,

¹ I have dealt elsewhere with these subjects at length, and have traced the origin of these newly arisen creeds to Islam (see *Towards Islam*).

² The Holy Qur-án, xv. 9.

Jesus or others would have been the same, it may be said, had they reached posterity in their original shape.

Religion, if of Divine institution, must come from God, and be built by Him, and not by human hands.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION OF LOVE—COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

THE preceding chapter would have been the last in my book had it not been for the deliberations of the Modernists in 1922 at Oxford, in which, after their successive analyses of Christianity within the preceding six years, they finally defined it as a Religion of Love, shorn of all that was dogmatized by the Church since the days of St. Paul. But the analysis, true as it is, cannot be the final haven. It brings them to the gate of a new synthesis. Every destruction must be followed by a construction, otherwise it would lead to chaos. That it has done so in Christendom is an open secret. Empty churches and vacant pews, and the formation of various new persuasions, are eloquent of the chaotic condition. Modernism has come to complete the demolition of this time-honoured edifice, which was already crumbling; but where is the material wherewith to raise a new house on the débris? Human hands cannot replace the Divine Hand.

Things made by God cannot be replaced by man-made things. The material left by Jesus himself is not sufficient for the building of a new edifice. How could a Religion of Love, as the Master sought to make it, lead to all the sin that has blackened the annals of Christianity? The Church was all meekness and humility, all love and tenderness in her early days, but began to walk knee-deep in blood after the conversion of Constantine. She continued in her sanguinary course for centuries, and then assumed other forms of intolerance and oppression, which continue till to-day. To-day we find the same. I do not, however, propose to give a description of the darkest of those deeds, in which religious intolerance found its worst possible expression in the hands of those who took upon themselves the most delicate duty of shepherding their flock in the name of Jesus. It is too well known to need mention here. I would only say one word. The history of Christendom would have been quite a different one had Jesus been allowed to finish the work he so nobly began. His ministry was too short for the arduous task before him; he was quite capable of it, as its foundation shows. Unfortunately, his time was cut short; and the coming, self-elected, bricklayers were not worthy of the Master. The Head Mason was removed imme-

diately after he sketched the outlines of the Holy Tabernacle. He left us no "lime and mortar"; his successors not only unaided by "Divine Inspiration," but actuated by baser motives, were left to their own choice. Brutality got the better of finer feeling, and the religion of meekness, charity, love and, foremost of all, the religion of "submission to Divine will," became perverted into a religion of aggressiveness, tyranny and persecution. These workers of the dark mediæval ages, however, wanted authority. They forged something, therefore, and ascribed it to the Master: "But he that believeth not shall be damned"¹ was the motto of their labours. Man everywhere takes it upon himself to be the agent of God, even without the necessary qualifications for the post. The workers in the Church began to damn others, simply because the latter could not see eye to eye with the former. Perhaps these Heaven-warders had some reason for it. If God had, after all, to condemn him "that believeth not" to eternal perdition, why should He not begin His work in the world, and lighten the task of punishment which He had to begin on the Day of Judgment?

The Religion of Love is too big a subject to receive full justice here. It deserves inde-

¹ St. Mark xvi. 16.

pendent handling and a separate book : it is worth the task. Moreover, it has now become a duty, incumbent on Muslims to-day, to speak their word on the subject, in refutation of the reflections made, in the Oxford Conference, on Islam. The Conference could not see its way to admit the claim of Islam to be a Religion of Love, though it went so far as to accept Buddhism as on a par with Christianity in this respect. Any attempt, from a Muslim pen, to throw light on this question is not, indeed, a necessity in the defence of Islam, but a service to mankind. The world badly needs a real religion. If Islam can show a candle to the benighted world in this direction, it is high time to do so. Islam has again been challenged in the Conference before mentioned, though by innuendo rather than directly. It has been insinuated that Islam lacks all those altruistic feelings and humanitarian principles so necessary to constitute a religion of love. The challenge, as I believe, comes from want of knowledge. The gauntlet, thus thrown, should, however, be picked up by someone in the Muslim camp. I accept the challenge, and if I am spared time, and granted ability, by the Grace of God, my next work shall show that Islam is such a religion.

I cannot, however, close the book without making a few observations on the subject.

In a way, I wish to index the forthcoming book briefly, with necessary comments on the existing condition of the world.

The Religion of Love should begin with man's love for God. The Book of Islam—the Holy Qur-án—makes this the real basis of Islam ; and teaches that it should be stronger than all other love and friendship. Love for God is the main and ever-recurring theme of every religion, and yet we are in the dark as to how to express our love for Him. We are not anthropomorphists, nor is our God clothed with human passions. He is above being adored in the manner we adore our sweethearts. Some say our love for Allah (God) means our absolute submission to Him, which is the meaning of Islam ; but still, even that is an abstract idea, and as such we are none the better for it, as far as practice goes. The Holy Prophet Muhammad has, however, given us a practical suggestion in this respect. “*Love His creatures,*” he says, “*if you wish to love your God.*” Here is a Gospel of Peace—the peace we badly need, and yet it is far off in spite of all our efforts. We could achieve it, if we could but act on this holy admonition. Unfortunately our love does not go beyond our own doors, and if it does exceed its usual limits, a narrow-minded patriotism, actuated more by fear of other nations, curbs its whole-

some efforts. Love others as you love your own kith and kin, with no distinction of race or colour, and you have secured the millennium. The Kingdom of Heaven, for which the Christians are on their knees every morning and evening, will rule the world.

Could there be a better and at the same time more laconic exposition of the Religion of Love, than that which has been summed up in the above quotation ? “ If you wish to love your God, love His creatures.”

“ What is Islam ? ” someone asked Muhammad. “ Reverence and respect for the commandments of God, and compassion to His creatures,” was the reply, which explains “ Love of God and love of man ” in its real practical shape.

Love is neither a lip-expression nor the infatuation of a passionate heart ; it is a high emotion and a noble passion, and needs a world of actions to bring it to reality. Love of God can be expressed only through man’s readiness to obey his Lord. No other consideration should come before God ; our love for Him should eclipse all other loves, as the Holy Qur-án says : “ Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.”

La-illah-il-Allah—there is no other Deity or object of adoration but One, Allah—is the formula of Islam, which expresses the love of

man for God in its highest form. The rest of the religion, as taught in the Holy Qur-án, supplied its believers with the means of making the *La-illah-il-Allah* a practical reality.

Love of man, or, in the words of Muhammad, compassion for the creatures of God, is, again, a very difficult subject to be dealt with. All prophets come with this same message. Love should not, however, be confused always with tenderness of actions and softness of heart, or with infatuation, as I said before; real love for man consists in feelings or actions that may better his condition and uplift him to his utmost capacities.

It is immaterial whether our actions—means adopted to raise humanity (and this is only the true love)—are harsh or tender. The punishment of an offender who breaks the laws of society is only a form of love receiving its expression from magistracy. Love of the greater number of the units of society—to safeguard their interests as well as to reclaim the offenders—necessitates his being kept under conditions where he may not be tempted to give way to his evil propensities. He, therefore, should remain the king's guest within the four walls of what is termed gaol. The action of the larger units, as well as our love that seeks to reclaim the offending unit, demands that he be kept within the four walls. I need

not multiply illustrations to make my meaning clear. It would be an insult to the intelligence of my readers to do so, as the world is now sufficiently advanced to appreciate the necessity even of a war against those who interfere with the general welfare of humanity. War becomes righteous when waged in the interests of love for man and love for God, Who does not wish to see His creatures oppressed by the tyranny of others. If God sends hurricanes and storms to purify an area contaminated by some epidemic; if the Great Fire of London was a providential necessity after the epidemic of black fever some centuries ago; love sometimes assumes a stern shape, and deals in harsh methods. But these expressions of true love should not be devised by the human mind—mediæval days had had enough of that from the self-styled wardens of the human conscience; it should appear under the dictates of God. That personification of humility and meekness, and embodiment of charity and mercy—the gentle teacher from Nazareth, with all he said from the Mount of Olives—has been reported to have said this also: “I have not come to bring peace but to send fire and sword into the world.” Words apparently too harsh to befit his general tenor of life, but they are reality and truth, even in their literal meaning; and,

by way of explanation, I am tempted to append to these pages that which I wrote in November 1922 in my book *The House Divided*. The quotation may be read with some advantage, and for enlightenment, by those also who think that Islam cannot claim to come under the category of the "Religion of Love," because of its sanction of war under certain circumstances.

The sacred Teacher formulated not a few beautiful ideas in his Sermon on the Mount; but before he could give a practical shape to his noble precepts he passed away. On the other hand, humanity, at that period of history, had hardly been uplifted enough to give actual appreciation to his high sentiments. They were passed over as ideals and dreams, perhaps; and to prove that they were too lofty to be practised, they were honoured in the breach. On the other side, politics and party factions, at the very outset, began to supply the motives at work in the propagation of the faith in the West. England is a Protestant country, and therefore its relations are not cordial with others who follow the same Lord. The reason again is obvious. Politics brought about the Reformation here. *Women made the country Protestant*. Just as Constantine severed his connection with the old faith, while keeping all its features in the new Church, so Henry VIII retained all the para-

phernalia of the Papacy in the Established Church of England. He wanted to throw off the Papal yoke, and that he did. The Church, unfortunately, has shown more statecraft than befits an ambassador of God, as someone remarked in the controversy now going on in the Press. Can there be any question of love, when the Church regards it as her duty to endorse the views of the State? Leave aside the command to "Love thine enemy," as I just remarked, people cannot love their brother in faith, if he belongs to one and they to another denomination. Ireland furnishes an apt illustration. Nationality, the love of country in preference to the love of God, has found favour with the people in the West to such an extent that they are surprised to find that the Muslim's love for his co-religionists knows no barriers of country or continent. They say: "If we Christians fight other Christian nations, community of religion does not come in the way. Why should you Muslims in India be at such pains to show your love for those who are not Indians?"

"Love thine enemy" was not, however, an ideal, or merely the vision of a dreamer, as many have thought; but a practical reality, though the teacher, by reason of his short ministry, could not give a practical interpretation of it. He could not, as he said himself,

give the whole truth. He did, nevertheless, promise us the Comforter. Who is the prophesied personality, is a matter of argument; but it is clear that the Church, as believed by some, cannot be the comforter. Her adherents never knew what "Love thine enemy" meant. If the Spirit of Truth was the Holy Ghost, Who came to express Himself through the actions and deliberations of the Church synods and councils from the days of Paul till our days, then we may be excused if we say that the Spirit has failed to perform His function, and has not said "all truth"; nay, He has not touched the question even. It is in vain to look for some illustration of "Love thine enemy" in the whole history of the Church in the past; and the Church of to-day, to quote the Archbishop of York, repels the world. How could it be condemned so by its own teacher, of the position and ability of His Grace, if it had been filled with the Holy Spirit?

Muhammad (the Peace of God be upon him and on all the prophets of the world) came when filled with the Holy Spirit, and gave the only practical illustrations of "Love thine enemy." But for Muhammad, the text would have remained a dead dream. With Muhammad, love was not a foolish sentimentality, but a real thing, the true salt of life and the

only factor for maintaining the health of human society. He had his enemies—enemies of the most implacable description. For fully thirteen years he remained a helpless victim to various kinds of persecution; he and his followers were subjected to every kind of torture and oppression that the human mind can conceive of. Then he had to leave his native place and flee for his life to Medina, distant 150 miles from Mecca. But the enemy would not leave him alone in his place of refuge. Their object was to kill him and extinguish the flame of Divine Light which he kindled, and which was flickering at that moment in the dingy room at Medina. They marched to attack him, which forced Muhammad to meet them on the battlefield. Those who speak adversely of his military feats—talking foolishly and without understanding—could easily satisfy their minds on the point by reference to the localities of the various battlefields. The first battle took place at Badr—a place at the distance of 120 miles from Mecca and 30 miles from Medina. The second battle between the Meccans and the followers of the Holy Prophet was at Uhud, 140 miles from Mecca and 10 miles from Medina. The third was the siege of Medina itself, when Arab clans mustered in their strength to crush the Prophet. Is it now difficult to find out who took the offensive

and who was on the defence? The allies were crushed, but it created a state of war in the whole country. All tribes rose against the Prophet, and offensive and defensive began on both sides, till the day came when the Meccans found the Prophet with ten thousand companions at the gate of Mecca. He did not go with the object of fighting, but to perform the pilgrimage. Mecca fell without the shedding of a drop of blood—an event unique in history. The conquest of Mecca gave an opportunity which enabled the Prophet to prove that he was the prophesied Comforter, that he did come to give practical interpretation to the truth preached by Jesus. When his enemies were awaiting their fate at the hand of the conqueror, they found him the most generous man that the world had ever seen. He not only forgave them to a man, but they received many favours and positions at his hands on the very day of the victory, which their descendants are enjoying to-day. Hindah, the notorious wife of Abu Sufyán, whose ferocious hatred of the Prophet actually impelled her to eat the heart of Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, who fell in the battle of Uhud, became the mother of the ruling dynasty of the Ummayyads. "Love thine enemy" was thus put into practice once for all, and the world can refer to no such event in its history.

Muhammad was the most practical of prophets ; he did not remain content with preaching principles and precepts. He laid down rules for giving practical shape to all his teachings. He would probe the whole case, he would go to the root of the matter, and find out all the practical difficulties in the way of the precepts he had enunciated, and then he would suggest a proper course by which they might be met. We love our kith and kin, and show our affection towards those who belong to our family ; but we cannot cherish the same sentiments for those who stand beyond the pale of such ties. He therefore declared that all men are members of one family. They are equal children of God, in Whose eyes the distinctions of race and colour are of no value. He gave the gift to every son of Adam, and made the earth a common abode for them all. These truths have been repeatedly preached in the pages of the Holy Qur-án and in the various sayings of the Prophet. The world is in a state of unrest ; trouble is brewing everywhere, and what is at the bottom of it all ? Certain units of humanity think that they are superior to others ; they will not allow others the same privileges which they reserve for themselves. Go where you will, this is at the root of the whole trouble. This is not religion, it is

atheism, it is sordid materialism. Every morning on their knees the Christians bless the Name of Our Father Which is in Heaven ; are they the only sons of that Father, and the rest of the world the children of bondswomen ? If not, if that was not the Master's meaning, then they are brothers, members of the same family. What a weakness in faith, what hypocrisy ! And why do they go down on their knees to repeat those words when their actions give them the lie ?

The West has discovered the principle of the survival of the fittest, and in her pride and self-conceit she deems it sufficient to justify all the actions of which a nation is guilty, when it reduces other nations to nothingness. The principle is, from the point of view of the interest of humanity, the most pernicious conceivable ; and the Holy Qur-án gives us something nobler and superior to it, and that is, after all, a truism. "Those survive others and live longer," the book says, "who bring benefit to others." Look at all Nature around you ; see how it bears testimony to the truth of this saying. If the contemplation of the fact that certain brambles, or thorny creepers, which sap the life of the tree they creep upon, has given the West the inspiration of the survival of the fittest and the struggle for existence, as Huxley calls

it, these brambles and creepers do not live long; look at the mighty oak, look at the trees which bear fruit, look at the hundred and one other things of Nature which live for long periods, and you will read the truth of the Qur-án. Nature allows long life to those only that are of some profit and use to others. It is the survival of the useful, and not of the fittest in the sordid sense of the word. Do good to others, live for others, and your stability in the world is secure. This is the best way in which one can love his fellow-being. "Love His Creation, if you wish to love your God," as the Holy Prophet said, otherwise we should close the doors of our places of worship, Church, Mosque or Temple, and forbear any longer to make a farce of our religions.

The world goes on towards universalism; it wants a Church with the whole world as its parish. Universal brotherhood of man under the Universal Fatherhood of God ought to be our goal, which will not admit class, creed, or colour distinction; and if any religion till to-day has succeeded in establishing it to a reasonable extent, it is, admittedly, Islam.

Selfishness is at the root of the whole trouble; it unfortunately dawns on the human mind at the very moment when the animal consciousness in him develops into self or indi-

vidual consciousness, which in itself is a blessing of God, as it alone creates the notion of private and personal rights, which is the motive power of all our activities. It is mine and it is thine—a self-seeking tendency, no doubt, and the very root of all culprit propensities, but, on the other hand, the *summum bonum* that sublimates man from animality to morality. Moral order at its initial stage demands respect of individual rights, observed on the basis of justice and equity. Charity and benevolence are the higher expression of love, but the nobler aspirations will become curbed, and will have no chance for further growth, if personal rights be not voluntarily respected. Besides, benevolence means self-sacrifice, and where there is no private right or personal property, there is no occasion for the exercise of self-sacrifice. You cannot estimate the spirit of selflessness if you get no chance to part with what belongs or should come to you. Individual consciousness is the constituency of sacrificing consciousness. Self-consciousness did, no doubt, create selfish habits, but self-sacrifice means the immolation of “self,” and how can it be exhibited, if “self” does not exist within the area of our perception ?

This is a big problem—how to raise ourselves from self-consciousness into world-conscious-

ness, that we may feel for all other units of humanity as we do for ourselves. The goal is not a Utopian conception, but a reality, and we are quite capable of attaining it.

The mother-consciousness is an illustration. She feels more for her children than for herself—individual consciousness in her case has become sublimated into something higher. Is it not the same, too, with many kind-hearted nurses when tending children not coming out of their own body? The Book of God refers to this capacity of self-sacrifice in the following lines : “God enjoins on you to observe equity and justice (in your dealing with others and more than that) and benevolence, (and that kind of it that you observe in relation to) your own family folks.”

Selflessness finds its natural display in a family circle. Marriage is the only channel where love and charity and kind-heartedness begin to thrive and have their natural flow.

“No asceticism in Islam,” so said the noble Prophet. “Marriage is among My Ways and one who does not follow My Ways, is not of Me.”

Sexual instincts, or the procreation of the species, was not at the bottom of family life. Family life in the Divine Judgment of Muhammad, was the best and the only nursery of high morals, where love, affection and mercy

flourish under the most natural and congenial conditions ; and so the Holy Qur-án said :—

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourself, that you may find quiet of mind in them, and He put between you love and compassion.¹

Family consciousness is sure to grow out of self-consciousness in almost all cases after marital relation, differing, no doubt, in degree on account of different conditions and temperament. But it is not the final goal. We have to travel farther, crossing many an intervening stage up to cosmic, or to use a better word, God-Consciousness, where we merge into the consciousness of others ; and the needs of everything else besides us become our personal concern.

Jesus had the same vision, but had needed a long course, with a regular code of discipline. An evolution from the animal consciousness in which we are born, up to God-Consciousness, is not an easy task. Besides individual and family consciousness, there are four other intermediary stations, and very hard stations to pass through, before we reach the terminus—the tribal, the racial, the country and the species consciousness, where we feel for every man, without distinction of race, colour, or creed, as we feel for ourselves ; after which there appears cosmic consciousness. We

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xxx. 21.

become clothed with Divine Attributes and begin to walk humbly with the Lord. A mere foundation of a few scattered ideas, tender, charitable and noble as they may be, is not what is needed. A code, systematic and exhaustive, is required, such as will meet every condition of life. The thorough study of human nature, with a competent knowledge of its capacities and shortcomings, alone can enable the codification of proper laws for our uplifting. Such a code should and can only come from the Source of all Creation, as He only knows what lies hidden in human nature. Besides, a law from God can, after all, command a submission which can hardly be claimed by any human institution.

Besides Love, we have got another passion engrained in our nature, which plays a most important part in the structure of human society and the formation of our character. It is anger. It is the twin of love. One without the other causes disorder and cannot perform its proper function. No doubt, love is the main thing, but anger within its legitimate limits is its rightful minister. If the reclamation of those in error is a good and necessary exhibition of love (and that, in most cases, does need exercise of some disciplinary measure), anger, then, will be only a stern expression of love. This and the defence

against persecution and oppression in their different forms, are the only two legitimate occasions for the exercise of anger, as provided in the Holy Qur-án. All other manifestations of anger are undesirable, and objectionable, too. It should not be forgotten that our other passions, desires, instincts, tendencies and morals—in a word, all that constitutes human consciousness—branch forth from the two animal roots, passions' desire and anger. Religion and every true philosophy seeks to reform them and shape them into good human morals, and spiritualize them, and raise them up to be the frontiers of God-Consciousness, with Divine Love as its main feature; in other words, to find out the religion of love; and it is not an easy task, that can be performed by synods and conferences. It falls within the province of religion coming from God—the Holy Qur-án brought this religion, and I hope to deal more fully with it in the near future. But here I will give some of its teachings on the subject. The religion, if it is to be named, cannot get a better name than that of Islam—the religion of submission to the Lord and of Compassion for man. It should not be forgotten that Jesus did not choose any name for his followers, nor would he have allowed others to do so. His was the religion of the tribe he belonged to.

It departed, very rightly, in some respects from the received opinions of the Jewish Church, and for that reason his followers were given the nickname of the Nazarenes, under which name they passed for three centuries, until the Council at Nice changed it to Christians. Our age has sufficiently progressed to accept these Councils of the Early Fathers as the mouthpiece of God. If these builders of the Church could so easily be induced, by the popularity of pagan cults, to introduce into their religion anything and everything that, they thought, would further their faith, no matter how alien it was to the real teaching of the Master, it is high time that their deliberations and findings should be forgotten. If we believe in God, we should choose a name more befitting His religion; God is not confined to any country, nation or denomination, so the religion from Him should be non-national in its very name, having no reference in it to any particular individual, country or race. Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Muhammadanism—a name wrongly given to Islam—are names unworthy of the religion from God, Who is the Lord of all worlds. They all smack of something confined to certain limits; they imply certain barriers, repugnant to those who live beyond those barriers. The Holy Qur-án, therefore,

proposed the most beautiful and, I may say, all-comprehensive name for the religion of humanity—Islam—submission to God.

If the latest findings of the Modern Church, as their Oxford Conference of 1922 shows, admit that the religion taught by Jesus is the religion of love, then why call it by a name that may keep others out of its pale? If Buddha, as the Conference decided, taught the same religion of love (and in my reading of that Great Master, his teachings go far beyond the recorded teachings of Jesus in inculcating compassion, mercy, fellow-feeling), and had it not been for the fact that most of the Buddhists do not believe in the Existence of God, Buddhism would be the more suitable name of the two. If, therefore, Buddhism and Christianity are kindred religions, why not adopt a name comprehensive enough to include those who do not care to come within the pale of Christianity? Christianity, as it stands, means a number of things with which many persons will not care to be identified. The world of to-day needs a universal religion which can only be the religion of love; and it should be universal in its appellation. In 1913, I was invited to take part in a religious convention, held at Paris. Its deliberations were akin to those of the Modernists. They, too, were in search of a religion, and used to meet

from time to time under the name of Liberal Christians. I had every sympathy with their movement, and, at their request, declared my willingness to co-operate with them, provided they could change the name of their body into something with which I did not object to identify myself. They saw my point, and changed the name to Unitarian Association. The rationale of the case is obvious, and, I hope, will commend itself to every sound judgment.

I give a few quotations from the Qur-án, which, strictly observed, will establish the Religion of Love on the earth, of God and His will, "as it is in Heaven." It is my intention in a subsequent volume to show how Islam raises animal consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness, and thus severs man from the two bonds of animality and guides him upward and ever up towards the precincts of Divinity, where he lives for God's creatures, and becomes a selfless instrument in the hand of Providence.

And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him, and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) kin and the alien neighbour, and the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and those whom your right hands possess.¹

And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If

¹ Holy Qur-án, iv. 36.

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either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion. And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely, the squanderers are the fellows of the devils. And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth, lest you should (afterwards) sit down blamed, stripped off. Surely your Lord makes plentiful the means of subsistence for whom He pleases.¹

(It is) the setting free of a slave or the giving of the food in a day of hunger, To an orphan, having relationship, or to the poor man lying in the dust. Then he is of those who believe and charge one another to show patience, and charge one another to show compassion. These are the people of the right hand.²

And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting over much: surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster. And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice.³

But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: My Lord has disgraced me. Nay! but you do not honour the orphan. Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor.⁴

About the guilty: what has brought you into hell? They shall say: We were not of those who prayed; And we used not to feed the poor.⁵

And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We only feed you for

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xvii. 23, 24, 26, 29-30.

² Ibid. xc. 18-18.

³ Ibid. xxxi. 18, 19.

⁴ Ibid. lxxxix. 16-18.

⁵ Ibid. lxxiv. 41-44.

Allah's sake ; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks.¹

If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you ; and this will do away with some of your evil deeds ; and Allah is aware of what you do.²

Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly ; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.³

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate ; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil).⁴

Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men ; and Allah loves the doer of good (to others).⁵

And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo ! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.⁶

Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant. And if a false imputation from the

¹ The Holy Qur-án lxxvi. 8, 9.

³ Ibid: lx. 8.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 133.

² Ibid. ii. 271.

⁴ Ibid. ii. 177.

⁶ Ibid. xli. 34.

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devil afflict you, seek refuge in Allah; surely He is Hearing, Knowing.¹

Surely man is created of a hasty temperament. Being greatly grieved when evil afflicts him, And niggardly when good befalls him. Except those who pray, Those who are constant at their prayers, And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion, For him who begs and for him who is denied (good).²

¹ The Holy Qur-án, vii. 199, 200.

² Ibid. lxx. 9-25.

APPENDIX

MUSLIM ETHICS OF WAR ¹

THE ex-Premier [Mr. Lloyd George], while yet in office, said in his Manchester speech that God had given him a sword, and as long as He gave him strength, he would wield it in defence of the Christians. The people are sick of war, and the ex-Premier's remark has aroused controversy only in the daily papers ; some of which insist on representing him in their illustrations as wielding a golf-club instead of a sword. Yet I venture to maintain that, at times, it becomes one of our highest humanitarian duties to unsheathe the sword. We cannot conscientiously stand aside as indifferent spectators when the liberties of an oppressed people are being trampled upon, or when religious freedom is at stake. Even so gentle a teacher as Jesus Christ, had to avow that he had come to send fire and sword into the world.

There do arise situations when the use of arms becomes an unavoidable necessity. Could Jesus view the agonies of a down-trodden people without striking a blow in their defence ? And such a blow might he not, in all probability, have struck had his ministry not been cut short ? Likewise, Muhammad not only permitted the use of arms under such circumstances, but made it a high virtue, saying that Paradise lies under the shadow of the sword.

Islam has long been stigmatized as a religion of the sword ; but that is a story of bygone days. Church

¹ *The House Divided*, pp. 25-37.

dignitaries themselves spared no pains during the Great War to justify warfare from the teachings of Jesus; though, by the way, a contributor to the *Islamic Review*¹ has shown that in their sermons on war the Bishops of London and Chelmsford were walking in the footsteps of Muhammad rather than of the Christ.

So we Muslims are at one with Mr. Lloyd George in his plea for the use of the sword in defence of helpless Christians. To us it is a religious obligation to protect those persecuted for their religious convictions—be they Muslims or non-Muslims. We therefore have nothing but respect for this sentiment of the ex-Premier. Indeed, we should have been quite ready to co-operate with him in its realization. But the ways and means that his Government adopted were far from desirable. It may be that he could find no guidance in the matter in the teachings of Jesus.

The apparent contradictions in the recorded teaching of Jesus as to the use of the sword, perplexing as they may be to the student of the Gospels, are consistent in Muslim eyes—nay, they are to him the teachings of very truth itself.

Occasions, as they arise, must be dealt with by appropriate methods; and what may be objectionable in one case becomes indispensable in another. Hence, the apparently conflicting nature of the Master's words, which are, in fact, intended to meet different situations—situations the nature of which he would no doubt have explained had it not been for the very brief duration of his ministry. He had not time enough at his disposal, and so he promised the coming of *another* Teacher (St. John xvi); and we Muslims find that other Teacher in the Prophet Muhammad. It was Muhammad who enlightened mankind on this all-important phase of human life. He showed—in precept as well as in practice—under what circumstance a Son of God shall send

¹ Vol. v, No. 9.

fire and sword into the world and under what his love goes out even to his enemies. Read the sacred words of the Master in the light of the Qur-án, and they embody the very truth; otherwise they seem impracticable and inconsistent. Christian preachers are often themselves at a loss to make out the precise purport of these teachings. They elect to regard them as abstract idealism. But they are not so to a Muslim. To him they are quite intelligible—in fact, the only true and practical teaching.

It will not be out of place here to make a passing reference to the Muslim ethics of war. Mr. Bonar Law, the new Prime Minister, has held out a policy of peace to the world, and for that, all must be profoundly thankful. But none can foretell when the havoc of a new war may burst upon humanity. Perhaps some prospective Lloyd George—if not that gentleman in person—may find the shadow of a suggestion in these lines. If a Christian Government unsheathe the sword in defence of Christians, then a Muslim, on the principles which we indicate below on the authority of the Qur-án, will stand shoulder to shoulder with it, even though, in so doing, he be acting in opposition to a Muslim Power.

The Qur-án sanctions the use of the sword under certain circumstances. First and foremost, in the cause of religion—religion as such, it must be borne in mind, and not Islam exclusively. For this, two distinct occasions have been mentioned. First, when a house of worship is in danger—be it Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, or any other—a Muslim is enjoined to shed his very blood to save it from demolition. Says the Qur-án :—

“Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them ;

“Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say : Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah’s repelling some

people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered ; and surely Allah will help him who helps *His cause* ; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty." ¹

It is significant that the mosque is mentioned last of all. This single verse has since been responsible for the safety of all buildings dedicated to any form of worship. Notwithstanding a thousand years of Muslim rule, India is still the home of thousands of the temples of idolatry. Can history produce a parallel to such magnanimity ? Where are the great and gorgeous mosques, one may ask, that were once the glory of Spain, Sicily, Southern France, Malta, and elsewhere ? To pick out a solitary instance here and there of the conversion of a non-Muslim house of worship into a mosque, is to make a mountain out of a molehill. Such cases—which are too rare to deserve any serious mention at all—are exceptions, due to indiscreetness on the part of individuals, and do, actually, only tend to establish the rule.

Again, the use of the sword is also permissible when freedom of conscience is at stake. Of all religions, Islam stands conspicuous in establishing a perfection of religious freedom. "There is no compulsion in matters religious," ² proclaimed the Qur-án, which has since been the Magna Charta of religion for peoples of all creeds under the rule of Islam. Not only is all interference with another's religious views forbidden, but, should such interference be enforced at the point of the sword, it is the duty of a Muslim to repel it with the sword. In the matter of religion, none may stand between man and God. It is the birthright of man to hold whatever convictions he deems right. Persecution of others must be resisted at all costs by a Muslim, irrespective of whether the aggrieved be a Jew, or a Christian, or of any other

faith. For this purpose the Muslim is not only allowed, but enjoined, to fight until perfect religious liberty has been established.¹

As regards temporal affairs, authority to wield the sword has been limited to one, and only one, case—self-defence. This permission has been further restricted by the condition that as soon as the enemy shall have suspended hostilities, and shown an inclination towards peace, then Muslims must do the same. This is a principle which Britain acted upon during the Great War; and the Church supported her. Whatever the interpretation put upon the Sermon on the Mount, the fact remains that in comporting herself as she did in the Great War, Britain followed the teaching and example of the Prophet of Arabia.

Muhammad had to fight seven battles in all, of which the first three—the principal ones, the rest being more of the nature of skirmishes when a general state of war prevails—best illustrate the principle in question. For thirteen long years the Prophet and his comrades were the victims of inhuman persecutions at the hands of the Meccans—an historical fact admitted by friend and foe. He suffered all this without retaliation. When, however, things reached a pitch when his life itself was in imminent danger, some safeguard became necessary. The very night when the conspirators were to make away with him, he managed to escape with his life to Medina, in the company of his devoted friend Abu Bakr. But his enemies did not let him alone, even in this far-off refuge 150 miles from Mecca. Jealous of his success in his new place of sojourn, they made repeated efforts to nip the tender plant of Islam in the bud. In all these three battles, the locality of the battlefield is, I think, a decisive factor, showing that the Muslims were constrained to resort to the sword in sheer self-defence. The first of

¹ See Muhammad Ali's translation of the Holy Qur-án, . 192, 193.

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these was fought at Badr, 120 miles distant from Mecca, the enemy headquarters, and 30 miles from Medina. And what was the comparative strength of the contending parties? 318 Muslims against 1,000 Meccans.

Uhad was the scene of the second battle. It was still nearer the Muslim's home of adoption—only 12 miles from Medina. The relative strength this time was about 1,000 Muslims to 3,000 Meccans.

The third was an attack on the town itself. Siege was laid to Medina with an army 10,000 strong. Do not these facts and figures—the locality of the action and the relative strength of the two—furnish conclusive testimony to the fact that self-defence was the only motive which prompted the Muslims to strike a blow? This is exactly the occasion when Jesus would have us sell our clothes to purchase swords. But it was left to Muhammad to illustrate also the practical application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and this he did in a manner unique in the history of the world. With 10,000 men he marched against Mecca—the same Mecca which was the scene, for long years, of Muslim persecution. The town surrendered, and was occupied without the spilling of a drop of blood. The vanquished, who had spared no ingenuity in inflicting tortures on Muslims—the ring-leaders of the deadly opposition, tormentors, oppressors, and assassins—lay wholly at the mercy of the victors. No punishment would have been too hard for them, according to modern military laws. But was it that the "Spirit of Truth" had to perfect the teachings of the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount—to lead people into "all truth"? Was it for him to illustrate, in practice, the precept of Jesus, "Love thine enemy"?

Summoning their leading men, he announced his decision—a decision beyond their wildest expectations of leniency—"This day there shall be no reproach on you." Such a magnanimous amnesty secured to the Muslims what could never have been gained in any other way—victory over their enemies' hearts, by love. The gulf

of decades of bloodthirsty malice was bridged by a single stroke. Love was applied to anoint and heal the raw wound of hate. The great and famous dynasty of Muslim rulers—the Umayyads—to whom the world is indebted for vast treasures of art, of science and of philosophy, sprang from the descendants of the ringleader of enemies thus won over.

So long as man is what he is, and his nature is not a true Muslim or a true Christian nature—which are at bottom one and the same—war will remain an indispensable factor of human life. Nevertheless, until the arrival of the millennium, much can be done to alleviate the terror and the suffering which are the outcome of wanton brutality. Consequently, Islam, recognizing war as an unavoidable evil, has at the same time laid down, as far as possible, rules and regulations to reduce its evils to the minimum. The Hague Conferences, too, some years since, framed a code of warfare for obviating unnecessary bloodshed, loss and suffering; but how far it has succeeded in practice it is not for me to say. If, however, such restrictions had been imposed by the Hand of God, the adherents of the various religions of the world would have been more careful to abide by them. The Qur-án lays down :—

“Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them.”¹

“And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.

“And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and persecution is severer than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the sacred mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they

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do fight you, then slay them ; such is the recompense of the unbelievers.

“But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

“And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah ; but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.”¹

The Prophet Muhammad also enunciated a system of war, which I give below, in the words of his immediate successor, Abu Bakr :—

“When you meet your enemies in the fight, comport yourself as befits good Muslims, and remember to prove yourselves the true descendants of Ishmail. In the order and disposition of the host, and in all battles, be careful to follow your banners boldly, and be ever obedient to your leaders. Never yield to, or turn your backs on, your enemies ; it is for the cause of good that you fight. You are incited by no less noble a desire than His glory ; therefore, fear not to enter into the fight nor let the numbers of your foes alarm you even though excessive. If God should give you the victory, *do not abuse your advantages, and beware how you stain your swords in the blood of him who yields ; neither touch ye the children, the women, nor the infirm old men whom ye may find among your enemies. In your progress through the enemy's land cut down no palms, or other fruit trees ; destroy not the products of the earth ; ravage no fields ; burn no dwellings ; from the stores of your enemies take only what you need for your wants.* Let no destruction be made without necessity, but occupy the city of the enemy ; and if there be any that may serve as an asylum to your adversaries, them do you destroy. Treat the prisoners and him who renders himself to your mercy with pity, as God shall do to you in your need ; but trample down the

¹ The Holy Qur-án, ii. 190-198.

proud and rebellious, nor fail to crush all who have broken the conditions imposed on them. Let there be no perfidy nor falsehood in your treaties with your enemies: be faithful in all things, proving yourself ever upright and noble, and maintaining your word and promise truly. *Do not disturb the quiet of the monk or hermit and destroy not their abodes, but inflict the rigour of death upon all who shall refuse the conditions you may impose upon them.*"¹

I leave it to the judgment of the reader to decide how far these regulations, if universally adopted, would have contributed to the welfare of humanity. Generally speaking, they have been observed by Muslims ever since. The most recent example has been seen in the peaceful occupation, by Mustapha Kemal's victorious army, of a territory where their brethren in blood and in faith had been subjected to the utmost devastation of fire and sword.

¹ *The Law Quarterly Review*, 1908.

